

Chapter 501 - Scarlet Hawk Commander

Hell was the place where all sins were judged. It was the ultimate representation of the solemnity of punishment.

Once disciples of legalism cultivated to a certain degree, they could draw a sliver of aura from the endless hells and merge it with their cultivations for life.

When they struck, their attacks would possess the great solemnity of hell, suppressing the vigour of the enemy. Every attack would cause pain from the very depths of the enemy's soul, stirring up their minds.

"I don't know what you're trying to do, but this kind of probing is very boring!"

Li Qingshan remained composed, ignoring the pressure and enduring the pain.

Wang Pushi's face changed. The sound of shattering ice rang out.

Li Qingshan strode forwards. He radiated with chilling coldness, leaving behind a frozen footprint with each step. His body seemed rather sluggish, but that was because he refused to expose his strength.

Without using his abilities that involved daemon qi, he unleashed the Arts of the Boundless Ocean and waves of spiritual qi surged forth in his sea of qi, purging the coldness. However, there were still slivers of coldness that continued to cling onto him, making it difficult to remove, but he ignored them.

The tea cup by Wang Pushi's side had already turned into ice. Suddenly, cracks appeared on its surface, and it exploded loudly.

The temperature plummeted once again. The chilling coldness wormed through all openings.

The Hawkwolf guards all retreated to the edge of the hall, forced to use true qi to resist the coldness. They turned their heads away, afraid to look at Wang Pushi. Even a glance from the corner of their eye would make them shiver inside.

They were like criminals who had committed unforgivable sins standing before their judge. No matter how violent and wicked they were, they still shook in fear, afraid to confront the solemnity of law.

Crack. Crack. The sound of freezing rose and fell. Frost crawled up the columns and the entire hall.

Another sound gradually drowned out the sound of freezing, which came from Li Qingshan. It was the sound of waves. Spiritual qi tried to surge out of him and into his surroundings like the tide. His bearing did not weaken, only growing stronger instead.

Li Qingshan continued to advance step by step at a steady pace. He stared right into Wang Pushi's eyes, paying no regard to the law.

The coldness of the Hell of Ice slips in through all openings, while my cultivation realm is above his too. The invading coldness should have injured him a long time ago, so why does he seem perfectly fine? This kid really is something else. Perhaps commander Gu's order was not without reason.

Wang Pushi had already reached mid Foundation Establishment, obviously superior to Li Qingshan's early Foundation Establishment. Although the difference between minor realms of cultivation were not as exaggerated as major realms of cultivation, they were still not for say.

In terms of spiritual qi, Li Qingshan possessed many advantages with his cultivation as he practised the Arts of the Boundless Ocean. As for the Wang Pushi, he was unable to demonstrate any of the advantages of his cultivation method on Li Qingshan.

Finally, Li Qingshan reached a meter away from Wang Pushi and stopped.

Two types of spiritual qi clashed violently between them, like ice sealing the ocean in winter only for the waves to smash it apart.

"Alright, just enough will do. If you continue, we might be able to stand it, but the building won't."

Hua Chengzan's hands landed on Li Qingshan and Wang Pushi's shoulders at the same time.

Both of them withdrew their spiritual qi. The armed chair that Wang Pushi originally sat on suddenly shattered into ice shrapnel.

"Commander, please issue the order!" Hua Chengzan took a step back, standing beside Li Qingshan. He was solemn for once, referring to Wang Pushi respectfully as commander.

"As commander Gu has ordered, Li Qingshan has rendered outstanding meritorious service, and his performance has been exceptional. He is hereby promoted to the Scarlet Hawk commander of the Clear River prefecture!" Wang Pushi said rather reluctantly at the end.

With that, not only did Li Qingshan become stunned, but the other Hawkwolf guards were all surprised too. They had been ordered to assemble here, but they never thought it would actually be something as major as that!

Only now did Li Qingshan understand why Wang Pushi had gathered everyone here. As it turned out, Gu Yanying had promoted him to commander.

Is it because she's afraid I'll go to the Chan Monastery of Deva-Nāga, so she's giving me some benefits? No, it's not just benefits. I can't simply turn down my role as a commander if I don't want to do it. If I want to leave the Clear River prefecture, I'll need her permission as my commander too.

Of course, Li Qingshan did not believe Gu Yanying had developed feelings for him because of his confession. She probably still only treated him as a relatively important chess piece.

Hua Chengzan clapped his hands, and Hua Chenglu in scarlet clothes walked in from a side door. She carried a brand-new set of uniform for the Scarlet Hawk commander, with a tiny, scarlet bronze hawk tablet placed on top. She smiled. "Congratulations, big brother Li. No, it should be commander Li."

"I was wondering why old Wang was in such a bad mood. So he's been fired!" Li Qingshan laughed.

Wang Pushi shot him a vicious glance. Hua Chengzan explained in a hurry, "Don't talk nonsense, Qingshan. Old Wang has been promoted to a White Wolf guard. He's going to the Ruyi commandery and leaving the mess that is the Clear River prefecture. This is fantastic news for him."

Wang Pushi was indeed rather displeased, but it was not because of himself. Being promoted to White Wolf guard and going to the Ruyi commandery had always been his dream. He just felt like the position should have gone to Hua Chengzan instead. However, after a series of tests, he could not help but admit that Li Qingshan was indeed stronger than Hua Chengzan. He did have the ability to hold the position of commander.

“You got lucky, kid. You managed to earn commander Gu’s favour.”

“Heh. That’s called strength!”

Li Qingshan, however, was thinking about something else. Right now, the war had only recently come to a close, yet Gu Yanying was already transferring a senior general of the war away. Clearly, she was extremely confident that the humans and daemons could not continue fighting.

And where did this confidence come from? It was probably all from him!

In the blink of an eye, Li Qingshan changed into the Scarlet Hawk commander uniform, standing with his arms behind his back. He strut around complacently with a valiant bearing. He had truly become the commander of the Clear River prefecture Hawkwolf Guard now.

Wang Pushi and Hua Chengzan retired to the side, giving him the room in the centre.

“Greetings, commander!” Almost a hundred Hawkwolf guards assembled again and bowed together, greeting him loudly.

Li Qingshan glanced past these people and thought to himself, So this is my squadron in the future? Hmm, looks like Qian Rongzhi isn’t here.

In the past when he discussed the three minor pillars of the Clear River prefecture with that protector Yan or whoever he was from the Iron Fist school, never did he think that he would become a part of them in the future. However, from his current perspective, it did not seem like a big deal at all.

The Hawkwolf guards all changed in expression as they had their own thoughts. Some of the Hawkwolf guards had even gone out drinking with Li Qingshan before. The kid from the countryside a few years ago had actually become their superior.

Hua Chengzan clapped his hands again, and a banquet of over a dozen tables was arranged to celebrate for Li Qingshan and to send Wang Pushi off. This was only the internal farewell banquet of the Hawkwolf Guard. In the future, the Academy of the Hundred Schools would definitely hold one too. Wang Pushi would not be going anywhere for now.

“Little Hua, this position should have gone to you. How about we exchange our positions?” During the banquet, Li Qingshan also realised why Wang Pushi was so unhappy, so he spoke to Hua Chengzan with a smile. He really did not care about this position.

“Do you think this is shopping, where you can exchange whatever you want?”

Hua Chengzan felt Li Qingshan’s sincerity as well, and the sliver of ill feeling in his heart completely vanished. He was quite touched by his gesture. He raised his cup and toasted. “This is called the younger generation surpassing the older. Boss Gu has an eye for talent. Hopefully you can watch my back a little in the future.”

“No problem, no problem. Though, the matters of the Hawkwolf Guard will be entirely up to you. I’m only responsible for watching over and fighting.”

Hua Chengzan smiled bitterly. “No problem, no problem.”

Following the banquet were a series of matters regarding the transition of power.

After taking on the duty of a commander, Li Qingshan was allowed to choose an item from the storage room of the Hawkwolf Guard.

I hope I can find a fragment of the Cursive Sword Calligraphy. With this perfect wish in mind, he passed through the layers of formations and finally set foot in there, but he was left deeply disappointed. After several years of war, there were not a lot of items left in there.

“Why don’t you hold on for now? Given the current situation, the Ruyi commandery might resupply us very soon.” Hua Chengzan had almost managed to sniff out something from Gu Yanying’s command. It seemed like the war had truly come to an end.

During the war, the fifteen hundred kilometers of the Clear River prefecture had become a lone island, with virtually all contact cut off from the outside world. As for the cultivators in there, they were basically forced to fight, forbidden from fleeing unless they had some special connections. Even if they managed to escape, they would be hunted down. The people inside obviously were not resupplied with any talismans or pills.

“Fair enough.” Li Qingshan nodded even though he had failed to find what he wanted.

However, Li Qingshan discovered that the position of commander did come with quite a few benefits. First of all, the treatment and remuneration he received had improved by quite a bit, but Li Qingshan did not really care about this aspect given his wealth.

What mattered the most was the elevation in status. He had gone from a lackey on the outskirts to a decision-maker. He could directly influence many important decisions of the entire Academy of the Hundred Schools, and he possessed access to many confidential pieces of information. As a system of violence that answered directly to the empire, they possessed their own information system.

These documents and pieces of information seemed disorderly and unsystematic, spanning from astronomy to geography, but at certain times, they could potentially play a critical role.

After completing the matters for the handover, it was already morning.

Li Qingshan played the role of an irresponsible boss, leaving everything up to Hua Chengzan as he returned to the Chain mountains alone.

The mental map of the Green province unfurled with a swish before locking onto the tiny Clear River prefecture.

Li Qingshan began to choose. He was choosing a suitable place for him to establish a water dwelling. His gaze first landed on the great river that flowed through the entire prefecture, meandering like a dragon.

Although it was “tiny”, the Clear River prefecture covered an area even larger than the entire Jiangnan region from Li Qingshan’s past life. As for the Clear river, it could rival great rivers like the Yangtze river or the Yellow river.

The Clear river began in the Boundless mountains. It stretched over five thousand kilometers long, and the area it covered could reach over a million square kilometers. If he could refine it, he would basically receive divine help with both cultivation and fighting.

Even if he faced a Golden Core cultivator, Li Qingshan was confident enough to maintain the upper hand.

However, Li Qingshan took out the Water God Seal and examined it according to the books he had read.

God seals were mostly divided into two types, but they could vary drastically in quality. Refining a creek could also condense a Water God Seal, but it would not be able to hold a large river. The only way about it was to use the creek as a foundation and constantly develop and strengthen the god seal.

I don’t know whether the Water God Seal can hold the waters of the Clear river. If I tried to refine it and it turns out it’s not enough to hold it, that’ll be funny. It’s not like I have any competitors right now. Let’s take it one step at a time and go slowly!

He had to choose a body of water first. He could start with the affluent of a larger river!

Chapter 502 - The God of the River

Li Qingshan stroked the mental map with his hand, and the images changed. Rivers protruded out, turning into a bright, clear blue. They were like capillaries, crossing the entire Clear River prefecture.

The aorta among them was obviously the Clear river.

Although Li Qingshan did not aim to refine the Clear river right now, that was his still end goal. It had not changed.

As a result, the river he chose had to be connected to the Clear river. This was not difficult at all. Finding a river that was not connected to the Clear river in the Clear River prefecture was more difficult.

Following that was the choice of geographic location.

Li Qingshan’s finger traced along the Clear River prefecture from the Boundless mountains. He stopped halfway and drew a circle.

This place was relatively close to his territory underground. It was very likely for the underground river in the territory to be connected with the waters there.

He used only rivers to connect the two territories. At the same time, the underground river also led straight to Cobweb city.

And, there was a large lake within the circle.

The Clear River prefecture was littered with lakes of various sizes. Even if there were not ten thousand, there were still a few thousand of them. However, there were only three or four that were the largest. The Lake of Dragons and Snakes was among them, but it was not the largest in the prefecture.

The reason why the Academy of the Hundred Schools had been constructed there was mostly in consideration of the fact that the prefectural city was relatively close and spiritual veins ran through the region, which made it rich with spiritual qi. Under the circumstances of being unable to refine water systems, the size of these systems was not particularly important.

The lake that had caught Li Qingshan's eyes was called Clear Court lake. It was truly the largest lake in the Clear River prefecture.

If the god seal was not enough to refine the Clear River prefecture, then he could take a step back. Refining Clear Court lake first was a good idea too.

This would all depend on the level of the Water God Seal Ru Xin had given him.

God seals were like cups, varying in size. Although water could be emptied out, the cup still remained. They could still hold water if they were taken elsewhere.

If the god seal had once refined a major river like the Clear river, then it would be able to hold the same quantity of "water" again. If it could not, that did not necessarily mean Li Qingshan would be forced to stick with creeks and streams in the future.

As long as he broke free from the restraints of the cauldrons of the nine provinces, he obviously could go from small to large and gradually increase the size of this container so that it could hold even more rivers and lakes.

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Under the blue sky, the boundless Clear Court lake shimmered with light. The mountainous islands stood tall in the lake as water stretched as far as the eye could see. Pure-white water birds soared in the blue sky. It was a sight that could open the mind.

Regular people who saw Clear Court lake for the first time would stand on its shore and gaze out, probably mistaking it for a sea.

Li Qingshan sensed the dense water spiritual qi within the lake as soon as he arrived on the surface. As a water-elemented Daemon General, just cultivating in the lake could bring many benefits.

There were numerous cities and towns on the shore. He could tell with a single glance that they were populous places of prosperity in the past, but many settlements suffered from the experience of warfare. However, he could still see many fishermen floating on the surface as specks of light.

Li Qingshan had been confident when he first saw it on the mental map, but when he saw the lake for himself, he began to doubt whether the god seal in his possession could hold it or not.

"Forget it. I'll find a river first and try with that!"

Li Qingshan unfurled the mental map again and found a large river that flowed into Clear Court lake. He flapped his wings of wind and arrived at the outlet in the blink of an eye.

However, he gave it some further thought and continued upstream. He found a smaller river that flowed into the larger river. It was a smaller river, but it was still over thirty meters across.

“Let’s try with this smaller river first!”

Li Qingshan dove into the water head-first, and the contents from all those books appeared in his head. Through their descriptions, he gained a rough understanding of the way to refine water systems. He possessed the Water God Seal, and he was refining a masterless body of water, so it should not have been particularly difficult.

Wielding the god seal, he channeled his daemon qi into it first. The god seal lit up, coiling and moving around like a dragon or a snake.

Then, Li Qingshan released his daemon qi. His tremendous daemon qi reached the riverbanks very quickly. The surface of the raging waters immediately flattened out to a mirror-like finish, without a single ripple. A while later, it turned back to how it was before.

Li Qingshan moved upstream as he constantly unleashed his daemon qi, immersing the surroundings.

Refining water systems was a delicate job. Although the god seal in his hand could save him a lot of trouble, he still had to traverse the entire water system and immerse every part of it with his daemon qi.

The affluent was not particularly long. Six hours later, Li Qingshan finally traced his way back to its source. A faint-blue, meandering track was left clearly in his sea of consciousness.

Li Qingshan withdrew his daemon qi and pointed at the Water God Seal in his hand.

The Water God Seal gave off a glow similar to water ripples. When the glow settled down, a small part of the seal lit up. The meandering track was exactly the same as the one in Li Qingshan’s sea of consciousness.

Li Qingshan was overjoyed. Only a small part had lit up, which meant the smaller river was nowhere close to the maximum amount the Water God Seal could hold. His confidence for refining Clear Court lake increased a little.

At the same time, he sensed that the entire water system was under his control. Water spiritual qi merged with his body through the Water God Seal. Although it was not very powerful, it triumphed in the fact that it was endless.

From that moment onwards, he had become the god of this river. Even without daemon qi, he could control the water there as he wished.

What came next was refining the main river.

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The rain drizzled endlessly. An old fisherman currently sat on the nose of his boat with a straw rain cape and a bamboo hat in the centre of the river, fishing. He would pick up the flask of alcohol beside him from time to time and take a sip. He had as much leisure as he could have.

Suddenly, he saw the float sink. He reeled his line in a hurry.

The thin fishing line became taut, but it refused to budge. Had he hooked onto a rock?

The small boat tilted slightly and the old fisherman could vaguely make out a huge shadow that swam by in the water. Shocked, he tossed down the fishing pole and retreated frantically.

With a splash, a carp leapt out from the water.

This should have been a sight that the old fisherman had seen his entire life, but he became stupefied with fright. His mouth hung agape. That was because the carp was even several times larger than his boat.

The carp also stared at him with widened eyes and opened its huge mouth in an attempt to swallow the old fisherman. It was covered in fiery-red scales, but there were ink-like splotches of black on its back, which slightly seemed like a black lotus.

“Fish monster, don’t even think about making trouble!”

The old fisherman’s reactions were fast. He kicked off the nose of the boat. The boat was submerged by the water before suddenly shooting back up due to buoyancy. He pushed off it to leap into the air, shooting towards the riverbank. He was actually a first-rate master.

Boom!

The carp had crushed the boat to pieces as shards of wood shot in all directions. A huge hole appeared on the surface of the river, forming a whirlpool.

The old fisherman ached all over, as the wooden shrapnel had injured him. However, he could no longer worry about that. He lowered his head to check the surface of the water. The carp landed in the water before floating back up, opening its mouth, just waiting for him down below.

The old fisherman was a martial arts master, but he could not fly, much less know how to use some divine technique like pushing off his right foot with his left. He had nowhere to draw force from in the air, so all he could do was watch as he fell towards the fish’s mouth.

“I’m done for!”

At this moment, the carp suddenly closed its mouth and turned around, diving back into the water.

With a plop, the old fisherman landed in the water. Just when he was about to swim over to the riverbank, he noticed that the water surface upstream had suddenly become extremely smooth, drifting downwards like a mirror.

“What is it this time?” The old fisherman’s face changed drastically. Clearly, the fish had been frightened away by this.

In the blink of an eye, not a single ripple remained in the water around him. Something brushed past him. In that instant, all of his hairs stood on end as his mind froze up like it had fallen into a cavern of ice. His limbs all stiffened as he directly sank into the centre of the river.

A while later, the surface of the river turned back to normal, and the old fisherman reappeared on the surface. He spat out a mouthful of water and collapsed on the riverbank. He was in a sorry shape.

He wanted to eat fish, but he ate no fish. Instead, a fish had almost eaten him. The waters of rivers and lakes were too deep. As it seemed, he could only fish in streams in the future.

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There seems to be daemon qi up ahead. I better catch up and take a look.

When Li Qingshan refined the smaller river, he did not come across a single proper daemon, probably because it was far too shallow, unable to support daemonic beasts that had transformed into daemons.

When he refined the larger river, he finally encountered a few. However, most of them had not even condensed a daemon core. However, they were much larger than other members of the same species. Their intelligence was lacking, having yet to properly evolve from beasts.

It made his plan to capture a few underlings to serve under him fall through. Now that he finally ran into one that bore some proper resemblance to daemons, he could not help but take special note of it.

“You sure flee quickly!”

Li Qingshan continued swimming forwards, but the daemon qi had already vanished. He could only advance slowly if he wanted to refine the water system.

The larger river was much wider than the smaller river and there was much more water. Although Li Qingshan had already gained some experience with refining water systems, he still remained rather slow.

However, upon further thought, he stopped worrying. Underground, the blackwater salamander and ice frog were both water-elemented daemons among the daemon soldiers under his command. By then, he could just dispatch them here.

Two days later, early in the morning.

Li Qingshan finally returned to his starting point, the end of the river and the shore of Clear Court lake.

Welcoming the rising sun in the east, he opened his hand, and the Water God Seal flashed. Light poured out like waves as a thin streak of light unfurled, implying that the regions of water under Li Qingshan’s control had expanded.

Only around a tenth of the Water God Seal had been filled. The god seal that Ru Xin had given him was truly of a higher quality. It was completely sufficient for refining Clear Court lake.

Li Qingshan no longer hesitated anymore, leaping into the vast Clear Court lake.

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Clear Court lake was not circular. Instead, it was an irregular semi-circle. It was shaped like a running rabbit.

In the belly of the rabbit, which was also the centre of Clear Court lake, was a lone island shrouded in mist and illusionary formations. Only on some special occasions would the criss-crossing structures of various heights be visible, rising and falling with the terrain they stood on.

As a result, there were rumors that Clear Court lake possessed an immortal's island, but that was only the belief of ignorant people. People who truly understood the cultivation world all knew this was where the sect of Clear Court lake stood.

As the saying went, deep mountains and great marshes hid figures of power. The island was abundant with spiritual qi, making it an excellent, blessed land of cultivation.

As a renowned sect of the Clear River prefecture, Clear Court sect was also an important member of the Daemon Suppression alliance of the Clear River prefecture. In order to fend off the attacks of night roamers, they too had moved to the Rose Cloud mountains.

However, Fu Qingjin was now heavily injured. He remained on Benevolence island to recover and he saw no guests, so the Daemon Suppression alliance became a group without a leader. The conflicts and disputes between the sects spiraled out of control, so the master of Clear Court sect brought his disciples back to Clear Court lake.

Chapter 503 - The New Lord of Clear Court

Since it could claim such a blessed land, the Clear Court sect was obviously not without a foundation. The master of the Clear Court sect, Yang Pinghu, was known as the Lord of Clear Court. He had already reached late Foundation Establishment. Although a gap still existed between him and Zhou Tong who was at peak Foundation Establishment, he was still confident about holding off even the moon demon to a certain degree with the many formations around the island and his cultivation.

"Master, there's bad news! Bad news!"

This day, Yang Pinghu happened to be in his dwelling, cultivating arduously, and the calls of a disciple rang out from outside. He was rather displeased, but he still stopped cultivating and opened the door. If not for something urgent, his disciples would have never disturbed him.

"What's wrong? What's made you so frantic?"

"There's daemon qi in the lake."

"What's so strange about that? There are daemons in the lake, so there'll obviously be daemon..." Yang Pinghu furrowed his brows unhappily. With the immensity of Clear Court lake, aquatic creatures would often accumulate sufficient spiritual qi and turn into daemons. His Clear Court sect had stood here for a thousand years. They had slain plenty of daemons in the past, so why would they be afraid of some measly daemon qi?

However, when he casually scanned around with his soul sense, he was left surprised. He understood why his disciple had become so frantic. The daemon qi did not come from a certain location. Instead, it pervaded the entire lake, surrounding the island from all directions.

With how immense the daemon qi is, it belongs to a Daemon General at the very least. But what's he scattering his daemon qi so much for? Is he trying to refine Clear Court lake? That's impossible, unless... unless he has a Water God Seal!

As the master of a sect and as someone who had lived several decades longer than Li Qingshan, he was extremely rich in knowledge and experience. With a single thought, he guessed roughly what was going on. He became even sterner.

If a daemon water god really appears in Clear Court lake, then will there still be any room left for me and my sect? Hmph, you better get through me first if you want to become a water god!

Yang Pinghu would not be venturing out and taking on the Daemon General in a battle to the death. As long as the formations of the Clear Court sect remained intact, the Daemon General would not be able to refine Clear Court lake completely and become a water god.

But as he thought about it, he did not find it sufficient, so he also contacted the Academy of the Hundred Schools and the various larger sects. Surely they could not turn a blind eye to a matter so big.

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The process of refining Clear Court lake was much more difficult than refining a mere river.

Li Qingshan spent over half a month, yet he had not even refined half of Clear Court lake. Gazing at the lone, towering island in the distance, Li Qingshan rubbed his chin. There was no chance for him to deceive anyone with this, so he did it out in the open. He wanted to see who was bold enough to stop him.

As for the “holdout” right in front of him, if they were willing to move obediently, then so be it. If they were not, there would definitely be some forceful dismantling.

“Get out here, those inside!” Li Qingshan burst out of the water and rode on the tips of the waves as he called out loudly.

His bellow was like a bolt of lightning, striking the formation on the edge of the Clear Court sect and kicking up a wave thirty meters high. The thick mist that lingered all year round showed signs of dispersing.

“Oh no, it’s the moon demon!”

The voice rang through the entire island. Yang Pinghu saw a red figure, and his expression changed drastically. Originally, he thought it was some water element Daemon General taking advantage of the situation to make some trouble, but he never thought it would be the moon demon in person.

“I’ll give you five minutes to dismantle the formation and get the hell out of here. Once the five minutes passes, I’ll personally destroy the formation. By then, I’ll feed the entire Clear Court sect to the fishes!”

“Don’t panic, everyone. The moon demon is alone. Our formations won’t be destroyed so easily. Reinforcements will arrive very soon.” Yang Pinghu comforted his disciples before calling out loudly, “Moon demon, don’t even think about this! How dare you attempt something condemned by the world and try to take the position of a water god for yourself. You’ll definitely die a horrible death in the future. If you’re clever, backing away right now is still not too late.”

Li Qingshan only replied with a single word, “Ten!”

Yang Pinghu’s eyebrows leapt up. Didn’t he say five minutes?

“Nine!” Li Qingshan laid on his side on the wave, propping up his head with one hand. He was completely unconcerned.

“Master, let’s just flee. He even managed to destroy a Duality Formation of Disintegration!”

“Shut up!” Yang Pinghu barked. A person’s renown was as important as a tree’s shadow. He also felt greatly pressured.

“Eight!” Li Qingshan had no intentions of relying on intimidation alone. He counted even faster, filled with impatience, as if he was in a hurry to finish counting so that he could carry out a massacre.

“Fellow Yang, you have to hold on! You can’t let the moon demon get away with what he wants! We’re hurrying over to reinforce you right now!” At this moment, the academy sent back a message. It was Liu Zhangqing.

As the prefect of the Clear River prefecture, how could Liu Zhangqing simply watch as a daemon became a water god in his territory? He had already gathered the school leaders as an emergency to discuss their counterplan.

Yang Pinghu’s expression became even uglier. Hold on? For how long? Right now? How fast is that? He is about to finish counting. He had some confidence in his formations, but what if they were not enough?

Even if they managed to stop him this time, what was he supposed to do when the army of night roamers came the next time?

“Six, five, four, three, two, one.” Li Qingshan finished counting in a single breath and leapt up from the top of the wave. His body swelled rapidly in the air.

With a great boom, he kicked up towering waves.

A colossal figure landed in the lake. His scarlet hair flowed like a waterfall as his eyes shone like fire. His distinct muscles seemed to be cast from iron as he stood with the size and weight of a mountain, yet also possessing violent explosive power. He was already standing in a relatively deeper part of the lake, yet it only reached up to his waist.

Li Qingshan clenched his fists and moved his shoulders about, stirring up the lakewater. He took a step forward, radiating with malice.

As the disciples of the Clear Court sect stared at the black, incoming figure, they all shivered inside as they became ashen.

Yang Pinghu’s face paled slightly. He said to himself inside, Don’t be afraid. You’re a late Foundation Establishment cultivator, and you possess a geographic advantage. The moon demon is only a Daemon General.

“Alright, I’ll go! Please just promise you won’t harm the disciples of my Clear Court sect!”

Yang Pinghu bellowed out and flew up from the island, arriving in the sky. He stopped on the edge of the formation so that he could escape back into it at any time. His face was filled with grief, indignation, and helplessness as if he would stay behind for a battle to the death with Li Qingshan if it were not for the safety of his disciples.

“Piss off.”

Li Qingshan waved his hand impatiently as his voice boomed thunderously. Destroying the formation was not difficult, but he did not want to waste daemon qi and drag out the time he spent refining the Clear River prefecture. Who knew when Spider Queen Lolth would challenge him.

Right when Yang Pinghu wanted to collect the formation banners, Li Qingshan said, “Wait! You can go, but leave the formations behind. Don’t touch the puppets and turrets you’ve constructed here either.”

Yang Pinghu’s face changed, but under the stare of the scarlet eyes, he chose not to touch a single item on the island in the end. He handed the formation discs and the other items for controlling the formations to Li Qingshan before scurrying away with his disciples.

Li Qingshan circled around the island and felt very satisfied. The island was very vast, and the structures on there were elegant and exquisite, yet also possessing a great sense of style. Additionally, there were many special plants and animals on the island for people to admire.

The Clear Court sect had only managed to build up to such a scale after a thousand years, yet it had all fallen into Li Qingshan’s hands so easily now. He had plans on turning this place into his water dwelling. Although he was of the water element, his original form was not an aquatic lifeform after all, so he did not particularly like living in water.

As long as he possessed the god seal, it was not like he could not cultivate on the island.

Li Qingshan admired his spoils quickly. Just when he was about to continue refining the lake, he suddenly raised an eyebrow and sneered. “You’re asking to die!”

Yang Pinghu understood very well. Right now, many sects in the Clear River prefecture had been destroyed, so there were plenty of alternative places for cultivation. Protecting his own life was more important. If anyone wanted to oppose the moon demon, they were more than welcome to do so, but he would not be doing something so stupid.

But now that he had finally escaped, he felt deep resentment after his delight and relief died down. Never had he endured such humiliation in his life. His cultivation dwelling had been forcefully stolen from him after all, so how could he not be resentful? As a result, he ground his teeth.

“Damned moon demon. Once I overcome the next heavenly tribulation and reach Golden Core, I’ll definitely cut you into pieces. Only then can I pacify my hatred.”

If that were all he did, then so be it. It was not like Li Qingshan could hear him, and even if he did, he would not care too much either. However, right when he was about to leave Clear Court lake, he grew more furious the more he thought about it. Suddenly, he came up with an idea and sent his disciples away first before landing on the shore of the lake alone.

Yang Pinghu extended his arms and water spiritual qi extended to the depths of the lake, dispersing the daemon qi that pervaded the water.

He was also of the water element, possessing the ability to refine Clear Court lake. However, he did not have a Water God Seal, so no matter how much effort he put in, it would be useless. He would only be able to cause some troubles for Li Qingshan.

He only had a single objective. Even if he could not harm Li Qingshan, he wanted to properly irritate him and vent a little.

The other aspect to this was so that he could give the Academy of the Hundred Schools and the Daemon Suppression alliance an explanation. He obviously had quite the confidence to be bold enough to do this. He was very far from the centre of the lake. Even if Li Qingshan managed to sense it, he would have fled already.

With my cultivation at late Foundation Establishment and such a large distance between us, what can the moon demon do to me?

Just as he thought about that, he saw a scarlet figure shoot across the surface of the lake, gliding over.

Boom! Boom! Boom! Boom! The surface of the lake exploded violently after the scarlet figure flew past, leaving behind a gully thirty meters deep.

“How can he move so quickly!” Yang Pinghu was alarmed. He pulled out a bident and rode away on it in a hurry. He was afraid to remain for even a second longer.

The Dragon Seizing bident was a heirloom arcane artifact of the Clear Court sect. Although it was of inferior quality, it could still allow him to fly much faster than regular spiritual artifacts.

However, Li Qingshan’s regular speed could already rival Daemon Commanders. Combined with his wings of wind, even though it made turns more difficult, his speed for moving in straight lines was so fast that even the Spider Queen struggled to react in time.

Three thousand meters, three hundred meters, thirty meters. The distance between them rapidly closed.

Yang Pinghu was filled with utmost regret. If he had known earlier, why would he have done something so unnecessary? However, he also knew it was too late for regret now. He bellowed out, “I’ll kill you!” He had no time to use any techniques at all. Three scarlet talismans flew out.

Boom! Boom! Boom! With those three sounds, three enormous fireballs swallowed Li Qingshan, but in the next second, Li Qingshan’s figure burst out of the flames. His scarlet eyes shone like fire as he radiated with malice.

“I spared your life, yet you still tried to cause trouble! Die!”

The Dragon Seizing bident turned into a blue streak of light, shooting towards Li Qingshan. However, before it could even unleash its power as an arcane artifact, Li Qingshan seized it in one hand. His other hand reached towards Yang Pinghu’s head.

Another scarlet talisman was ignited, turning into a golden barrier—shattered! His protective spiritual qi surged out violently—shattered!

Five fingers gripped his skull and with a crack—shattered!

Chapter 504 - Unstoppable

“S- spare me!”

Yang Pinghu knew he was done for. His eyes were wide open and filled with deep regret, refusing to accept this.

“You cannot be spared!”

Li Qingshan gripped the Dragon Seizing bident firmly and plunged it into Yang Pinghu’s chest. When it emerged from his back, the tip had already been dyed red.

Yang Pinghu widened his eyes in resentment, immediately dying on the spot.

The past sect masters of the Clear Court sect had used this Dragon Seizing bident to seize and kill countless daemons in this Clear Court lake. Yet in the end, the sect master himself died to his own heirloom arcane artifact. It sure befitted the principle of karma.

“How uptight!”

Li Qingshan shook his head, casually tossing Yang Pinghu’s corpse into his hundred treasures pouch.

Actually, Yang Pinghu had many different techniques at his disposal, but faced with such speed and an attack like that, he actually could not even use a single technique at all apart from wielding the Dragon Seizing bident and tossing out a few life-saving talismans.

The difference of an entire realm was a difference among worlds.

With the fourth layer of the ox demon, Li Qingshan already rivalled the Spider Queen in terms of strength, raw power, and life force. He had also almost been captured alive countless times. After breaking through to the fourth layer of the tiger demon, his other aspects were basically equivalent to a Daemon Commander apart from insufficient daemon qi.

In a direct confrontation with a Daemon Commander out to kill, Yang Pinghu might have been able to last a moment if he had practised the cultivation methods of Body Practitioners before, but he did not. As a result, he did not even last for a moment.

Li Qingshan opened Yang Pinghu’s hundred treasures pouch and checked through it. Everything that a millennium-old sect had built up was quite impressive, but regular talisman and pills obviously no longer interested him.

“Hmm? This is an Origin Spirit pill!” Li Qingshan took out a dark-golden pill. Its spiritual qi was completely withdrawn. It did not even give off any fragrance. It was rather hefty in his hand, making it seem more like a metal ball.

Origin Spirit pills had a similar function to True Spirit pills. They were pills for breaking through to the Golden Core realm, but the difference in their value was something else. And, they truly never appeared on the market.

So far, Li Qingshan had only obtained one from the Green Vine Elder’s hundred treasures pouch. He had gained another now, which gave him some extra guarantee when he tried to condense a Golden Core in the future.

He picked up the Dragon Seizing bident again. The bident split into two, shining with light. Profound glyphs vaguely appeared as the bident turned into a two-headed snake.

Ever since the blood-red blade shattered, he had been lacking a suitable weapon. Although he had never used a bident before, it was still an arcane artifact after all, and it was of the water element. As such, it was perfect for now.

Li Qingshan filled in the small region that Yang Pinghu had destroyed—Yang Pinghu had sacrificed his life for it, the life of a Foundation Establishment cultivator, yet he only managed to waste fifteen minutes of Li Qingshan's time. He even geared him up with equipment instead. Afterwards, Li Qingshan casually refined the Dragon Seizing bident.

The shape of the bident changed slightly. The two prongs curved slightly like the horns of an ox. From a certain perspective, it suited him better.

So that's how you use this thing. Li Qingshan casually placed the Dragon Seizing bident on his shoulder and returned to the waters that belonged to the Clear Court sect, continuing with his job.

Suddenly, he sensed daemon qi in the distance. It was the one that had slipped by in the river. For some reason, he found the daemon qi rather familiar.

"Get over here!"

Li Qingshan pointed the Dragon Seizing bident in the direction of the daemon qi, and the prongs that resembled snake heads suddenly parted, shooting over as two streaks of light. They turned into ropes of water that dove into the depths of the lake.

Before long, there was a splash, and a great, red carp burst out from the water, having been tied up. As the ropes wrapped around it, it rapidly shrank too.

"So it's you!"

Li Qingshan gazed at the floundering carp between his prongs and recognised it with a single glance. It was the carp he had fed with pills back then in Ancient Wind city before being released into the lotus pool of the Qian estate.

Afterwards, the Black Lotus Altar Lord slaughtered the city. The carp gave him the lotus pod the Altar Lord had left behind. In turn, he fed it a few more pills before releasing it into the waters of the Clear river.

He had never expected to see it here, and it had become so large after a few years, even having condensed a daemon core. Clearly, it had benefited quite a lot from the effects of a lotus seed from the Altar Lord.

The carp suddenly stopped struggling, staring straight at Li Qingshan as if it also managed to recognise Li Qingshan. Afterwards, it opened its huge mouth as if it was asking for pills.

"You actually managed to recognise me!" Li Qingshan was rather surprised. Had he accidentally leaked his daemon qi while cultivating in Ancient Wind city, which it memorised? That would not be too strange. Back then, it was only a regular carp, so there was nothing he thought too much about.

He casually fished out a pill and fed it to it.

“Alright, now you’re one of my underlings. You can say it’s fate. The only way you can repay me is by turning into a beauty and paying with your body. Speaking of which, are you male or female?”

The carp swallowed the pill and floundered around happily. Who knew whether it had understood what he was saying.

Li Qingshan shook his head and tossed it back into the water. It swam around before returning to its original size.

The Dragon Seizing bident sure had some usages!

Sensing a few more clusters of daemon qi surging in the lake, Li Qingshan smiled and dove into the water, continuing with his refinement of the lake.

The huge, red carp swam beside him. He had basically enlisted his first daemon soldier for this water dwelling.

As Li Qingshan refined Clear Court lake, he managed to shock the cultivation world of the Clear River prefecture yet again.

The school leaders held a meeting in the academy.

“Where’s Li Qingshan?” Liu Zhangqing frowned. Li Qingshan was now the Scarlet Hawk commander. His identity and status varied drastically compared to the past. Technically speaking, it was mandatory for him to attend a meeting like this.

“I’ve contacted him, but he wants to cultivate in seclusion, so he’s left it up to me!” Hua Chengzhan said helplessly.

“He sure is clever. Who doesn’t want to cultivate?” Liu Zhangqing said in displeasure, but he did not think too much about it.

However, Hua Chengzan did find it rather strange.

When Superman appeared, the male protagonist was never present. Only an idiot would find nothing wrong with that.

Technically speaking, there had only been two times when the moon demon was present and Li Qingshan was not, but this was already enough to form a clue to clever people. And, when Li Qingshan appeared, the moon demon never seemed to appear, or he only sent his clone.

This did not necessarily mean Hua Chengzan had begun to suspect Li Qingshan of anything because of this. No one could connect a Scarlet Hawk commander with a daemon so easily. At most, Hua Chengzan guessed that this was his tactic to avoid direct confrontation with the moon demon.

However, as the clues appeared one by one, there would be a day when he would discover something before anyone had realised anything was wrong. So-called clever people were just people who took note of every single detail.

“That guy, he had clearly come to my dwelling yesterday to linger around, disturbing my alchemy, yet he has entered seclusion today.” Ru Xin seemed to confirm Li Qingshan was avoiding conflict, but she unintentionally pulled Li Qingshan away from his connection with the moon demon.

“But even I wouldn’t be willing to make trouble with the moon demon right now. The late Foundation Establishment sect master of the Clear Court sect could not even withstand a single attack from him before losing his life. People like us value our lives even more than gold.” Hua Chengzan instead defended Li Qingshan.

His saying at the end, “value their lives even more than gold”, received the recognition of all the cultivators present. The descendants of the wealthy dared not take a single risk that could endanger their lives. All of them pursued longevity, so none of them were willing to risk their lives with someone else.

Speaking of which, Li Qingshan had spent three years in secluded cultivation, avoiding the most dangerous part of the war before rendering a fantastic service very quickly after establishing a foundation. He had even been promoted to Scarlet Hawk commander. And last time, during the decisive battle between the moon demon and Fu Qingjin, everyone had taken on huge amounts of risks, where even Zhou Tong almost died, but he had been missing yet again.

Liu Zhangqing could not help but sigh inside, This kid knows when to advance and retreat just too well! Perhaps only like that can you be counted as a legitimate cultivator. Nothing, no matter how major, is more important than your own life and cultivation.

Zhou Tong said, “If it weren’t for the fact that Yang Pinghu, that bastard, was afraid of trouble and had been tricked into leaving by the moon demon, how would he have died so easily?”

Hua Chengzan said, “If the moon demon wanted to trick them, he would have turned against him the moment he left. Why would he have waited to strike after Yang Pinghu had made it to the shore? I think Yang Pinghu was afraid of trouble, yet also reluctant to simply accept this, so he got in the way of the moon demon refining the lake from the shore. He probably thought the moon demon would not be able to do anything to him as long as he kept his distance, which was why he ended up killed.”

“Then are we only supposed to watch as he becomes a water god!?”

Hua Chengzan said, “We can constantly send people in from all directions to disturb the process and prevent him from refining the lake. However, according to the speed that the moon demon displayed when he rushed to the shore, we’ll probably have to pay with a life each time.”

“And, according to my analysis, his current strength has probably become extremely close to Daemon Commander already. A difference in strength as large as that can no longer be made up with using strategy. Honestly, there’s no longer anyone who can stop him in the entire Clear River prefecture.”

The two words, “Daemon Commander”, made everyone fall silent.

Liu Zhangqing let out a long sigh. “So it’s true. I’ve already reported this to the Marquis of Ruyi. Great general Han and commander Gu already knew about it too! If we can end this game of chess, then smaller figures like us don’t have to worry anymore.”

The feeling of being used as chess pieces was not fantastic, especially when they were used in a hopeless game of chess that already neared checkmate.

However, everyone present had thought it through. The Clear River prefecture had basically passed the news onto the Ruyi commandery the moment they received it. If there really were any countermeasures they could take, they should have received a reply immediately.

No, these observers had probably noticed something unusual long before them, as they still had not ended it. Whether the game of chess could end was probably beyond the control of even those three now.

Those who had undergone the first heavenly tribulation had already become ants in the eyes of those who had undergone the second heavenly tribulation. And yet, what were they in the eyes of the “kings” who had undergone the third heavenly tribulation and reigned over the Green province?

Liu Zhangqing said, “Ru Xin, Fu Qingjin is still on Benevolence island, right?”

“Yeah. He’s in complete dejection, walking around randomly with his broken sword everyday. When you run into him at night, you’ll even think he’s a wandering ghost.” Ru Xin smiled. She was probably the most composed out of everyone present.

Who would have thought that she was single-handedly responsible for the major incident of the moon demon becoming a god this time?

Liu Zhangqing said, “Check with him again and see if the Sword Collection palace has given any form of response!”

“Alright.” Ru Xin agreed happily.

Afterwards, Liu Zhangqing laid out his hands. “You can all go back and cultivate. I’ll let you know if we reach a conclusion. If you have nothing to do, please avoid Clear Court lake.”

“I think we should just spare the communication! We’ll leave it up to fate!” Zhou Tong left in annoyance before suddenly stopping and saying to Hua Chengzan, “Kiddo Hua, you still owe me a sword.”

Chapter 505 - The God of Moon Court Lake

The songs of fishermen rang out in the sunset as the water remained still.

In the distance, a few mountainous islands stood quietly in Clear Court lake. Their clear reflections on the water surface rippled with the rosy red of the setting sun.

The clouds blazed in the western sky, varying resplendently in colour, from a melted gold, a golden-yellow, to a brilliant violet and scarlet red. It seemed like a dazzling array of dancing beasts in the air.

In the eastern sky, the deep-blue curtain of light fell silently. A crescent moon sat quietly between the clouds along with some cold, sparsely-scattered stars.

The lights on the fishing boats were already lit, glimmering as specks as they drifted about. They embarked on their return journeys.

The songs of fishermen led to ripples upon ripples.

Suddenly, the ripples vanished.

The fishermen on the nose of their boats gazed at the water surface in surprise. What vanished were not only the ripples, but also the waves that had continued since time immemorial.

Abruptly, Clear Court lake settled down. There was not a single ripple on the surface as far as the eye could see. It was as if a huge, invisible hand had gently flattened the surface, making it smooth like a mirror.

At this moment, the mountains in the distance collapsed. The setting sun, sunset glow, crescent moon, and cold stars all fell from the sky.

The boats seemed like they were drifting through the sky. It was beautiful. However, the fishermen were all stunned. Even the oldest, most knowledgeable fisherman could not explain the sight before him.

A young boy on a boat extended the oar into the water curiously and stirred it around, but there was no sound, nor any waves. There was not even the slightest ripple. Water seemed to flow around the oar automatically no matter where it went.

People all gathered on the shore in the cities, towns, and villages around Clear Court lake. They watched on in a daze from the tall, lakeview buildings and from small, stone bridges.

The strange sight seemed to forebode a disaster, but an indescribable sense of magic filled the scene. It sucked away everyone's gazes such that they were unable to look away.

Two young men stood on the top of a tall tower by the lake. One had a pair of straight eyebrows and twinkling eyes, while the other one was flawlessly handsome. They were both men with a rare degree of handsomeness. The evening wind ruffled their clothes gently.

They were just like everyone else, staring straight at the mirror-like Clear Court lake. They wanted to say something, but something seemed to be stuck in their throats, so they said nothing.

Quite a while later, Hua Chengzan exhaled. "According to the records, whenever a daemon becomes a water god, the entire place should surge with turbid waves so tall that they almost touch the sky, manifesting the divine power from conquering the waters. However, never have they mentioned something like this. This is simply too strange. If I stare at it for a little longer, I feel like I'm almost going to be enlightened."

Han Tieyi's reply was only silence. He gripped his fists as his eyes shone.

Hua Chengzan said, "Don't be crazy! Last time, we had already been fortunate enough when he didn't attack us at the Rose Cloud sect. The difference between your strengths is only larger now."

Helpless, Han Tieyi let go of his fist. He could not help but acknowledge that.

Almost another month had passed since the meeting in the academy. No one had interfered with what was going on.

The Dragon King of Ink Sea did not express an opinion on the internal struggle between Lolth and Northmoon.

The provincial lord's estate had not sent anyone over to interfere or obstruct this soon-to-be water god.

The Sword Collection palace sent no one as reinforcements, nor did they send anyone to bring Fu Qingjin back. They allowed him to stay on Benevolence island.

The chess players seemed to be watching silently, wanting to see what this unexpected chess piece that Northmoon was would do. They became slightly curious about these minute changes in the situation of the chess game that should have had a conclusion that they were already aware about.

The war did not seem to come to an end. However, the Clear River prefecture had completely fallen silent already, watching the performance of this "moon demon" quietly.

The flames in the west gradually died down. The curtain of night was pulled over the sky, now littered with stars.

In the depths of Clear Court lake, Li Qingshan curled up his body like an unborn fetus, hiding within the Spirit Turtle's Profound Shell. The god seal hovered before him, glowing with gentle, blue light and illuminating his face. His eyes were slightly closed, and his expression was peaceful.

He could see very clearly that a huge swathe of water had appeared on the god seal. It was shaped like a running rabbit, almost filling the entire god seal.

The feeling of refining Clear Court lake was completely different from refining the two rivers earlier.

As his daemon qi permeated the entire lake, he gained a lake in his heart. It was so tranquil and peaceful that he felt like he had returned home.

That did make sense. Although he was of the water element, he never really submerged himself in water. This was the first time he had obtained a lake like this.

He had already reached the fourth layer of the Spirit Turtle's Method of Sea Suppression, but only at this moment did he seem to understand the Spirit Turtle Transformation and himself.

He had a feeling that he could sleep here for a century, a millennium.

All of the annoyances and everything that tied him down in the mortal world no longer had anything to do with him. His lifespan was lengthy enough to watch the seas rise and fall, turning into fields.

Even though the lifespans of daemons surpassed that of humans, it was not endless and without a limit.

The strongest aspect of the spiritual turtle was not suppressing seas or divination, but its extremely lengthy lifespan.

There were no enemies worth worrying about. He had plenty of time, while his enemies would be defeated by time in the end.

Given these circumstances, whether it was killing or fighting, did it not all seem so unnecessary?

I'm so sleepy. Let's just sleep for a while here!

Just a while...

A century...

“Qingshan!” A voice penetrated the lakewater and landed on the Spirit Turtle’s Profound Shell, but it was blocked. It failed to reach inside.

The Water God Seal hovered in the Spirit Turtle’s Profound Shell, using the power of an entire lake to replenish the Spirit Turtle’s Profound Shell. Even a Golden Core master would not be able to get through it easily.

Yet, Li Qingshan clearly seemed to hear it. He woke up and opened his eyes.

A beautiful young girl peered through the Spirit Turtle’s Profound Shell at him with her dark eyes. Her seaweed-like hair drifted silently in the lakewater.

Li Qingshan grabbed her hand and kissed her forehead gently before flying up and bursting out of the water.

An array of stars filled the lake. A resplendent, blue star rose up between the water and the sky. The Water God Seal shone with dazzling light, rising up rapidly with Li Qingshan.

In the next moment, everyone saw it.

Li Qingshan extended his hand and grabbed the star. The light subsided and merged into his body.

“From today onwards, this lake will be known as Moon Court lake.”

His voice glided across the surface of the water, spreading in all directions. The ripples he kicked up rapidly grew, reaching every single corner of Clear Court lake, no, Moon Court lake.

At that moment, everyone heard it.

At that instant, thousands of folds covered Moon Court lake. The interrupted sound of water flow rose up once again as the rolling waves surged endlessly, tearing apart the stars.

The groups of people on the boats and on the shore all knelt in the direction of the voice, exclaiming, “Bless and protect us, god of Moon Court lake!”

Regular people had no idea what cultivation was. They only knew something powerful had descended upon the lake, and the power it possessed was no different from the gods in legends.

“Ignorant.”

Han Tiewei said coldly. From today onwards, the daemons in the lake could make trouble as they pleased. There would be no cultivators coming to purge the daemons. They were actually bowing towards the existence behind all the troubles in the future.

Hua Chengzan smiled. “I don’t think so. Perhaps the moon demon will really bless and protect them.”

“You seem very happy that he’s become a god.”

“You can’t exactly call this happy, though I am a little relieved. If the provincial lord’s estate or the Sword Collection palace really sends someone over, they’ll definitely be a master who has overcome two heavenly tribulations. Once they clash, all the settlements and fields by the lake will be flooded with water. The war will become even more intense. There will be absolutely nothing we can do anymore.”

“And, godhood is a form of power, as well as a form of restraint. It places emphasis on defence, not offence. From today onwards, the moon demon won’t be leaving Clear- Moon Court lake so easily anymore. Isn’t that something worth celebrating over?”

As Hua Chengzan said that, he suddenly took off, flying towards the centre of the lake.

“What are you doing?” Han Tiewi asked.

“I’m going to go have a talk with him!”

.....

Li Qingshan spread his arms and gazed at the starry sky. He smiled. “Now is still not the time to sleep!”

He turned around and dove back into the water, asking Xiao An, “What brought you here?”

“I missed you.”

“Your master left?”

“He left. He gave me an arcane artifact. Look.” Xiao An took out a glistening wheel of dharma, and sure enough, it was an arcane artifact, and a mid grade arcane artifact at that.

Note: A wheel of dharma is often used as a symbol to represent buddhism. I’ve attached an image below:

The arcane artifacts Li Qingshan had obtained so far were all inferior arcane artifacts that had not even made the cut, including the Dragon Seizing bident he had recently obtained and the Cursive Sword Calligraphy. But it did make sense. Although they surpassed regular spiritual artifacts, barely enough to be regarded as arcane artifacts, they were still at a very low level.

Regular Foundation Establishment cultivators could only play around with supreme grade spiritual artifacts at most. Even those in possession of inferior arcane artifacts were a rarity, let alone those with a mid grade arcane artifact like this.

“He really has walked out of the Chan Monastery of Deva-Nāga after all! He sure is generous!”

A wheel of dharma’s full name was a wheel of righteous dharma, also known as a golden wheel. It possessed the great power to destroy evil and unleash righteousness, representing a smooth and unhindered journey to enlightenment. As it spun endlessly, it could destroy the mental afflictions of all.

The wheel of dharma in Xiao An’s hand was known as the Wheel of the Wisdom King’s Glare. The upper half was a perfectly round wheel, with three rings in total. The centre was shaped like an eye that was currently closed, radiating with twelve golden spokes. On the outer ring were twelve blue knobs. At the top were five balls of golden flames that varied in size, representing the five great Wisdom Kings.

Note: Wisdom Kings are guardians of Buddhism and are wrathful representations of buddhas. This is why you often have them glaring fiercely, to scare off demons that may interfere with enlightenment and the spread of the buddhist dharma. You can read more about them here:

The lower half was a pedestal, which could be wielded in one hand. It was shaped like a lotus and was an extremely rare mid grade arcane artifact of buddhism.

However, the greatest thing Xiao An had gained from this was not the arcane artifact, but her deeper understanding of the buddhist dharma.

As the head monk of the Bodhi courtyard and as someone who had undergone the second heavenly tribulation, the Annihilum Light Chan Master was a genius. He spent several centuries studying the buddhist dharma, so his guidance was something buddhist scriptures alone could not provide.

After the Annihilum Light Chan Master left, Xiao An immediately gained the confidence to forge the Blood Sea Banner.

Together, they had completely consolidated their foundation in the Clear River prefecture.

Having become the god of a lake, surging water spiritual qi entered his body through the god seal before merging with the spirit turtle's daemon core. Even without pills, his cultivation was basically guaranteed to progress at a certain rate. If he could refine the waters of the Clear river too, what effect would that have? He looked forward to it very much.

However, there were disadvantages too. From today onwards, the Water God Seal could not travel too far away from the bodies of water he controlled. The further away it was, the weaker its control would be. If he travelled five thousand kilometers away, it was possible for him to lose all connections. By then, he would have to refine Clear Court lake again.

And, even if he travelled a short distance away, the power in the Water God Seal would begin to flow away.

Of course, it was possible for him to leave the Water God Seal behind under the control of another aquatic creature. However, that was equivalent to giving away his status as a water god.

The Moon Court lake only recognised the seal, not the person. If the aquatic creature refused to return the Water God Seal, then it would be an issue. No matter who controlled the seal, their strength would increase dramatically in the lake.

He could leave it with a relatively weaker subordinate, ensuring he could suppress them with absolute power, but it would be another issue if enemies invaded from outside.

This was the trouble with becoming a god. He had lost his freedom. As a result, when Li Qingshan announced that he had become the god of Moon Court lake, there were many people who became relieved.

However, this trouble was not a particularly large issue for Li Qingshan.

Chapter 506 - Desiring the Watermirror

With a thought, Li Qingshan waved his hand, and the pieces of the Spirit Turtle's Profound Shell assembled into a smooth mirror. The mirror clearly reflected his figure.

However, the scenery in the mirror was not the bottom of the lake, but underground.

Li Qingshan sat in the underground cavern, constantly gathering spiritual qi to maintain the existence of the mirror clone. Suddenly, he opened his eyes and gazed over with his other pair of eyes, but he saw nothing.

Bang!

Li Qingshan lifted his hand, and his fingers pressed against the surface of the mirror. His mirror clone stood up and leapt into the air, disappearing from the underground cavern.

The reflection distorted, displaying the pitch-black bottom of the lake. Everything returned to normal.

Afterwards, Li Qingshan's figure walked out of the mirror.

It did not take up any of Li Qingshan's daemon qi. His clone was still the same clone. He had directly summoned it to his side from underground.

Li Qingshan smiled. After refining Moon Court lake, he gained a deeper comprehension about the changes with two of his innate abilities, mastering them further. The more he understood about them, the more he found them to be filled with profundity.

From that moment onwards, his mirror clone was no longer a shadow composed of a cluster of daemon qi. It became even more connected to his original body, tightly linked.

Suddenly, Li Qingshan waved the Dragon Seizing bident and stabbed through the hand of his clone before raising his right hand as if he was in thought. The moment his clone's hand had been pierced, he also felt a stabbing pain. A red mark appeared on there.

In other words, if my clone is injured, my original body will be injured too? This Watermirror's Image sure isn't as simple as it seems.

This seemed like bad news. Li Qingshan could no longer use his clone as cannon fodder without the slightest care anymore. But in reality, this was extremely good news to Li Qingshan right now.

Ignoring everything else, he could now give his clone the god seal without worrying about anything and leave his clone with the responsibility of gathering water spiritual qi in the lake. When he required it, he could receive this water spiritual qi. If his clone encountered a powerful enemy, he could directly summon his clone to his side, so he did not have to worry about losing the god seal. Afterwards, he could rush over with his original body for revenge.

The only thing he found slightly unfortunate was only his original body could summon his clone. If his original body could move through the mirror too, then that would essentially be teleportation. It would be more useful than any escape technique or movement technique out there. It would be equivalent to an additional life.

However, this was just the beginning. Li Qingshan could feel that these were only the tip of the iceberg for the secrets of the Watermirror's Image.

"It's him!"

Suddenly, Li Qingshan raised his head, sensing a familiar aura above the lake.

"Fellow Northmoon, I am Hua Chengzan of the school of Legalism. I have come to visit you," said Hua Chengzan as he arrived above the lake and admired the scenery. Then he turned around and asked Han Teyi, who rushed after him, "What're you coming here for?"

“Because I’m willing.”

“Fine then,” Hua Chengzan said helplessly. There should not have been any dangers with this trip of his anyway.

“You can come down!” Li Qingshan said resonantly. Suddenly, the surface of the lake parted. In the centre were a flight of water stairs that led down.

Han Tieyi became cautious. Entering the water domain under the control of a powerful water daemon was basically no different from walking into the belly of a beast. However, as he watched Hua Chengzan make his way down the stairs, all he could do was follow along. Speaking of which, he would not be Northmoon’s opponent even if he did not enter the water.

Further ahead was a long tunnel. As they walked through the tunnel, they could clearly make out the scenery under the water.

Suddenly, two specks of light lit up in the dark waters. A cluster of daemon qi gradually approached them. Hua Chengzan stopped and turned around, seeing a huge, red carp swimming straight towards them.

Han Tieyi gripped his spear, ready to strike, but Hua Chengzan stopped him.

With a splash, the huge carp leapt through the tunnel with a significant amount of water spray, brushing past them.

Han Tieyi lowered his spear, and the two of them continued forwards. Their vision abruptly opened up. The tunnel led to a great hall. There were no pillars, only an empty space, shaped like a droplet of rain that had hit the ground.

There was a tall throne in the centre. The moon demon sat there. The huge, red carp swam up from below the “floor”, gathering near him and opening its mouth.

Northmoon smiled, rubbing the huge fish’s head and feeding it a pill. “This guy sure is bold. He’s not afraid of others involuntarily killing him!”

Then he glanced at the oversized crab daemons, soft-shelled turtle daemons, and shrimp daemons and cursed, “You cowards, if you don’t get up here right now, I’ll stew you all into soup!”

They swam up in a hurry, standing in two rows. These were the underlings Li Qingshan had subdued with the Dragon Seizing bident. They were not powerful, but they were enough to keep up his appearance.

Hua Chengzan was left at quite a loss over how to react. Everyone knew about the fierceness and brutality of the moon demon, yet when he saw it for himself, he simply felt there was a slight difference.

However, as he approached the throne, he immediately sensed the power aura from him. Steadfastness, frenzy, and tranquility gathered on a single person, making it quite difficult to explain. The further he walked, the greater the pressure. When he was still ten meters away from the throne, he stopped. He actually felt like he was unable to take another step closer.

“Why have you come? Have you come to congratulate me? Or have you come to kill me?!” Li Qingshan’s eyes turned cold as he stared brightly at these two old friends from the academy. He did not want to come off as too polite, just in case he gave away any openings and damaged his reputation as the moon demon.

All Hua Chengzan felt was surging malice colliding into him like a landslide of a tsunami. Han Tieyi took a step forward and placed his spear vertically in front of Hua Chengzan.

“All of you piss off! Oh, I’m not talking about you!”

Li Qingshan withdrew his aura and bellowed while pointing down. As it turned out, before Hua Chengzan and Han Tieyi had even responded, the soft-shelled turtle daemons had already retracted into their shells. The crab and shrimp daemons were frightened into a mess too. Hearing the order, they immediately felt like their lives had been spared, scrambling for the deeper waters.

“I want to ask fellow Northmoon to return senior Zhou Tong’s Lightning Slaughter wooden sword.” Hua Chengzan understood he had no right to discuss a ceasefire with Northmoon given his identity. His request to return the Lightning Slaughter sword was more of a form of probing.

Before the situation had been confirmed, making rash contact with the moon demon would definitely lead to castigation from all. However, if he had come to retrieve Zhou Tong’s Lightning Slaughter sword, then it would be different.

“Zhou Tong? Who’s that?”

“The daoist priest who challenged you using lightning last time.”

“Oh, you’re talking about this!” As if he had come to a realisation, Li Qingshan fished out the Lightning Slaughter sword and tossed it gently into the air. Electricity surged as sparks flew.

“But, why should I return it to you? This is my spoil of the battle.”

“The Lightning Slaughter sword is of no use to you, sir. We can offer you something else in exchange.”

Li Qingshan leaned forward and said with raised eyebrows, “Right now, aren’t your lives and hundred treasures pouches both mine?”

“If you really do want them, feel free to take them, sir!”

Hua Chengzan spread out his arms in a free and easy manner.

However, he felt extremely nervous inside. According to his analysis, Northmoon had not even directly killed Yang Pinghu of the Daemon Suppression alliance, sparing his life, so the possibility for him to kill them was almost negligible. However, daemons were temperamental, so they could not be analysed using normal logic. No matter how clever a person was, they could not avoid accidents.

Li Qingshan laughed aloud. With a wave of his hand, the water palace collapsed loudly. Water flooded in from all directions.

Just when Hua Chengzan and Han Tieyi thought he was about to strike, Li Qingshan leapt up gently and vanished into the waves behind him.

“I heard the Academy of the Hundred Schools has a treasure called the Watermirror disc. If you want the sword back, bring the Watermirror disc for exchange!”

Li Qingshan’s interest had been piqued the first time he saw the Watermirror disc. There seemed to be a possible connection with the spirit turtle’s ability, the Watermirror’s Image. If he could obtain it, perhaps his comprehension of the Watermirror’s Image could reach an even higher level.

Then, Li Qingshan handed the Water God Seal to his mirror clone before withdrawing all of his aura and returning to the Chain mountains silently with Xiao An.

In Moon Court lake, Li Qingshan controlled his clone to swim towards a smaller lake near Moon Court lake. The quality of the Water God Seal truly was something else. Even the Moon Court lake was unable to fill the whole thing. There was still a bit left over on the edges.

However, it was not enough to accommodate the Clear river. Li Qingshan wanted to continue refining the bodies of water in the surroundings until he filled up the Water God Seal.

Arriving before the small lake, the Water God Seal shone brightly, and Li Qingshan devoted all of his attention towards it. However, he no longer used only his daemon qi, but all the spiritual qi from Moon Court lake too.

In under two hours, the qi filled the entire lake, and the Water God Seal obtained another region of water and more power.

Li Qingshan smiled. Sure enough, it was the same as what the books detailed. Once he had a larger body of water under his control, refining the smaller bodies of water around him would become extremely easy.

Afterwards, Li Qingshan continued to work diligently, refining most of the water in the surroundings. Finally, he filled the Water God Seal to the brim. The tremendous water spiritual qi seemed endless as if it wanted to leak out. It left Li Qingshan emotionally moved.

Suddenly, he experienced a flash of inspiration. The mental cultivation method of the Arts of the Boundless Ocean filled his head.

Although Moon Court lake could not rival an actual ocean, it did resemble an ocean to a certain degree. It would bring great benefits to Li Qingshan’s human cultivation too. He had truly received some unexpected results from pure accidents.

Li Qingshan believed that as long as he had some time to quietly comprehend it, he would definitely make a breakthrough with the Arts of the Boundless Ocean. It made him think that no matter how impressive the Ocean sect had been, it was impossible for them to possess their own domain of water to cultivate in.

Was this the limit? Of course not.

After all, the world was not created with god seals. They had been refined from nothing. The greatest value in this Water God Seal was that it could circumvent the blockage of the nine provincial cauldrons.

Li Qingshan arrived at the outlet of another small river that flowed into Clear Court lake, and he became slightly stern.

At the same time, Hua Chengzan had returned to the academy with Li Qingshan's condition, calling an emergency meeting yet again. This time, Li Qingshan was not absent.

The academy sent a message, so he rushed over with Xiao An. Currently, he sat in the meeting with Xiao An, wanting to see whether he would actually achieve his objective or not.

"The Watermirror disc? Absolutely not!"

Liu Zhangqing declined straight away. The Watermirror disc was the treasure of the academy, wielded by past leaders of the school of Confucianism. Its origins were extremely ancient, said to be a relic ancient cultivators left behind. As a matter of fact, it could not even be valued with the standards of present-day spiritual artifacts and arcane artifacts.

Although it did not possess the slightest offensive or defensive ability, it managed to prove its extraordinary value just by itself.

Even Liu Zhangqing himself believed he could not unleash its full powers, so why would he be willing to hand it over to a daemon?

Chapter 507 - The God-like Spirit Turtle

"What a great appetite," Ru Xin glanced at Li Qingshan and said to him secretly.

"It's so-so. I really need to thank you, miss Ru Xin!"

Li Qingshan stretched his neck as he sat to Liu Zhangqing's left in his impressive Scarlet Hawk commander uniform.

To Liu Zhangqing's right was Han Anjun. Just the change in his seating position demonstrated how different his status was now. It filled Liu Chuanfeng who sat in the corner with envy.

There were quite a few Foundation Establishment cultivators who belonged to the Academy of the Hundred Schools in the Clear River prefecture. Some had high degrees of seniority and others had powerful cultivations, but in a formation meeting, the people who sat at the very top would always be the prefect, general, and commander. Even Zhou Tong who was known as the greatest in the Clear River prefecture could only sit in a lower seat.

This was a form of orthodox status. Liu Zhangqing's status went without saying; the empire recognised him as someone who stood at the top in terms of status. While Han Anjun only led the school of the Military, he could directly enlist the disciples of the academy during times of crisis. As for the Hawkwolf Guard, they were a system of violence that answered directly to the empire.

They represented the three traditional authorities of politics, the military, and policing.

While the schools of Buddhism and Daoism were filled with talents and possessed a deep foundation, they could not interfere with these matters as religious figures.

Li Qingshan even tried to persuade Liu Zhangqing otherwise. "Don't fret, sir Liu. The Watermirror disc isn't something the moon demon can obtain just because he's asking for it!"

Hua Chengzan also felt that the moon demon's demands were very exorbitant. If the moon demon had taken something else, then so be it, but the issue was it happened to be the Lightning Slaughter wooden sword...

"Kid, that's easy for you to say. That's my sword, for heaven's sake!" Sure enough, Zhou Tong became rather restless. The Lightning Slaughter wooden sword was a critical arcane artifact for his second heavenly tribulation. It was something that tied into his life. Now that he had the opportunity to take it back, how could he not become interested?

"Please calm down, senior Zhou. I'm just considering the bigger picture!" Li Qingshan thought to himself, Heh, of course I know it's your sword. If it wasn't your sword, I wouldn't have taken it!

"Hmm. The Watermirror disc is precious, but the Lightning Slaughter wooden sword is a rare arcane artifact too. There might even be the chance for it to become an arcane treasure in the future. It's a real pity if we lose it. Sigh, let's just discuss what we'll do!"

Li Qingshan said a whole lot, but everyone felt like he had said nothing at all.

Zhou Tong even stated it bluntly, "You speak like you're breaking wind. You've achieved absolutely nothing!"

It was true. There was nothing Li Qingshan could say. Opposing the exchange was opposing himself, while supporting the exchange would easily attract suspicion, right?

The discussion gradually intensified, so Li Qingshan split his focus, dealing with the meeting in the academy on one side while focusing on the glistening Moon Court lake on the other!

He raised his head and saw a creek gurgling as it flowed down a mountain.

The creek was even smaller than the river Li Qingshan had refined in the beginning. If it were not for the fact that it meandered through the mountains and forests, it probably would not even be enough to condense a god seal.

Li Qingshan stood over the outlet as his surging daemon qi moved upstream. Under the support of the god seal, it filled the entire water system in the blink of an eye.

If there was still space in the Water God Seal, he could have merged it into the god seal with great ease and then expanded the bodies of water under his control slightly.

However, the god seal was already full, unable to accept even an additional stream.

Li Qingshan shut his eyes and felt an extremely thin, blue band of light stretched into the mountains and forests.

He extended his hand, and with a scoop, he removed the band of light and wrapped it around the Water God Seal.

Sure enough, this process was much more difficult than directly using the Water God Seal to accept the water system. It was equivalent to recondensing a god seal.

If it were not for Ru Xin's water god seal, he would not be able to overcome the suppression of the nine provincial cauldrons and condense a god seal even with a creek like this.

The Water God Seal spun like a spindle. The blue band wrapped around it like thread, again and again in an endless fashion.

As the condensing process continued, Li Qingshan gradually grasped the trick. The Water God Seal spun faster and faster. He also felt like this process was not as difficult as it was described in the books.

It's probably because I've already become a higher water god, while the creek is simply too small!

Li Qingshan spent a few more hours before finally refining the creek. The Water God Seal in his hand changed once more. It remained the same size, but the patterns on it did become a little more complicated.

Even if he scattered all the power inside, the level of the Water God Seal would have still increased slightly. This was an aspect that would not change.

Is it because I practise the Spirit Turtle's Method of Sea Suppression? Li Qingshan became filled with enthusiasm as he came up with another guess.

Li Qingshan's guess was correct. Regular daemons, even water daemons who had become Daemon Commanders, would require a few days at the very least to condense a god seal from the creek.

Creating something from nothing had never been so simple unless one was born with that ability, possessing the bloodline of a divine beast.

The spirit turtle happened to be the most renowned water divine beast. Its status was equivalent to the phoenix's status to fire.

The crux of the Nine Transformations of the Demonic and Divine was "transformation". It could grant a regular, human teenager the abilities and power only the strongest demonic and divine beasts in the world possessed.

Spirit turtles could even suppress boundless oceans, let alone a mere mountain creek.

Divine beasts possessed the adjective "divine" in the first place. They were born with divine powers, which was why the scenery when Li Qingshan refined Moon Court lake was different from regular daemons, resulting in a magic phenomenon.

Yep, they've finally reached a conclusion!

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The meeting at the academy entered a stalemate once again. Liu Zhangqing refused to part with the Watermirror disc, and while Zhou Tong wanted his Lightning Slaughter wooden sword back, it was difficult for him to bring it up.

Only at the very end did they barely reach a conclusion, which was to have Hua Chengzan visit the moon demon again and ask if he could change his conditions.

“Alright then. I’ll pay another visit, but it’s best if you don’t hold any high hopes.” Hua Chengzan sighed and stood up.

“I’ll come with you!” Zhou Tong stood up abruptly.

Hua Chengzan was unable to discourage him. All he could do was smile bitterly while allowing him to come along. “Senior Zhou, you have to remain calm when we get there. You mustn’t clash with the moon demon again.”

The two of them traveled through the night and returned to Moon Court lake. Only after wandering around for quite a while did they find the moon demon Li Qingshan on a small island in the lake.

Hua Chengzan raised an eyebrow as he found the situation even stranger than the last time they met. The moon demon crouched on the sandy beach as he tended to a barbecue.

A plucked chicken was skewered on a tree branch, turning on a fire as he lathered it with some sauce he had found from somewhere.

“My Lightning Slaughter sword!”

Zhou Tong was cautious. Only when he got closer did he see the tree branch that Li Qingshan turned was the unimpressive Lightning Slaughter sword, leading to a miserable shriek.

“It’s my Lightning Slaughter sword,” Li Qingshan corrected him before biting viciously into the chicken.

Hua Chengsan took a step forward and bowed politely. He expressed cheerfully, “The Watermirror disc belongs to the academy. It’s not something that we can decide to give away, so why don’t you change your condition? It’s not like you have any use for the Lightning Slaughter wooden sword anyway, so why not exchange it for something useful instead?”

“How’s it useless?! This is a crucial tool to my secret cooking technique, the dual roasting of lightning and fire. What am I supposed to do if I can’t eat it in the future anymore?” Li Qingshan waved the roast chicken around furiously. As he watched Zhou Tong’s face darken, he thought, Heh, I was right. Your sh*tty tree branch can only be used for a roast, and the food cooked with it takes especially bad.

As Hua Chengzan caught the burnt smell wafting from the roast chicken, he had no idea on how to respond. There was nothing he could say.

“Moon demon, you drive me crazy!” Zhou Tong bellowed out as he crackled with lightning.

Li Qingshan pointed with the roast chicken. “You are bold enough to attack me?”

“Senior, please calm down!”

Hua Chengzan went up to stop Zhou Tong. He did not do anything in the end. He had a violent temper, but he was no idiot. He would never do something as useless as throwing an egg at a rock.

And, he could clearly sense that the moon demon had become even stronger. He had become even stronger than when he stole the Lightning Slaughter sword from him!

If Zhou Tong knew the person standing before him right now was merely a clone, and he had actually failed to see through it, who knew what he would feel?

“It’s a pity, oh it’s a pity. It’s far too tiring to eat while holding it up. I’m only missing a good plate. That’s all I need for this to be perfect.” Li Qingshan shook his head as he said to himself, “If you really refuse to give it to me, I’ll just fetch it for myself in the future.”

Hua Chengzan shivered inside. As it seemed, the moon demon had truly set his mind on the Watermirror disc. The exchange this time no longer involved only these two items. It would also affect the future situation. If the exchange were successful, then it would be a very good beginning. They could bring the pointless war to an end.

However, if it were not, it was possible for the moon demon to reignite the war. By then, even the best situation would be the Ruyi commandery becoming involved, and the Clear River prefecture would turn into a mire of warfare again.

Li Qingshan obviously did not want to declare war against the academy. He had far too many acquaintances there. If he accidentally caused the death of father-in-law Han or his brother-in-law, then his relationship with Han Qiongzhi would truly become some half-assed drama.

Not to mention, with how great the situation was right now, he would never be stupid enough to actively destroy it. As long as no one could reign him in, he would continue to refine these rivers and lakes one by one. There were no negative consequences with that.

It was not like it cost him anything to throw some threats around!

Hua Chengzan dragged Zhou Tong away and returned to the academy, telling Liu Zhangqing everything that had happened.

This time, they did not hold a meeting. It was just the three of them. Liu Zhangqing’s expression changed again and again, unsure as to what to do.

“Prefect Liu, do you trust this lowly daoist?” Zhou Tong asked.

“You’re too polite, senior. Of course I do.”

“The Lightning Slaughter sword gives me an additional thirty percent confidence in overcoming the heavenly tribulation at the very least. If I succeed, I’ll definitely come up with a way to retrieve the Watermirror disc. If I fail, then I’ll still make it up to you with something else. As long as the threat of the moon demon remains, I will continue to watch over the Clear River prefecture.”

“If I fail the tribulation, the Lightning Slaughter sword shouldn’t be destroyed. It’ll probably absorb the power of lightning and become even more powerful, so it can replace the Watermirror disc. We can put this transaction in writing and send it to the Ruyi commandery. It’ll be a deal between the moon demon’s and my name. What do you think?”

In that instant, Zhou Tong seemed extremely calm as he clearly explained everything.

Hua Chengzan thought about it before understanding what was going on. What worried Liu Zhangqing the most was still the Ruyi commandery. The Marquis of Ruyi had not sent any reinforcements, but he had never told him to assist the daemon’s growth in power under its threats either.

By saying that, Zhou Tong had essentially lifted Liu Zhangqing’s responsibilities from his shoulders.

Liu Zhangqing remained conflicted for a very long time before finally agreeing reluctantly. "Fine, but I need to report this to the Marquis of Ruyi first. If the marquis doesn't object, then feel free to take the Watermirror disc!"

Chapter 508 - Neck and Neck

"The marquis shouldn't object. If we have a Golden Core cultivator, there's still a lot of hope in this game of chess. The moon demon might think he has prevailed, but senior Zhou will let him know sooner or later that this is his greatest mistake." That was what Hua Chengzan said, but he did not feel so optimistic inside.

"Hmph, I definitely won't just leave the matter be. How dare he use my Lightning Slaughter sword to roast chicken!" Zhou Tong's face twitched again.

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After the meeting in the academy had ended, Liu Chuanfeng extended a grand invitation for Li Qingshan to return to the school of Novels and take a look. Li Qingshan turned him down.

Liu Chuanfeng feigned anger. "Qingshan, the school of Novels is the school you originally came from. That's far too inappropriate of you to just walk by without going inside."

Unable to turn him down, Li Qingshan arrived on Cloudwisp island.

Passing through the gloomy bamboo forest, the bamboo loft shimmered with lamplight.

Li Qingshan sensed the existence of many auras. This place would never be as quiet and empty as before again.

Under Liu Chuanfeng's order, a great group of children huddled over. The eldest was only fifteen or sixteen, while the youngest only seemed to be seven or eight. They all called out together with their childish voices, "Greetings, first senior brother!"

Afterwards, they stared at Li Qingshan with sparkling eyes. Liu Chuanfeng had mentioned the glorious deeds of Li Qingshan frequently to encourage them and also to bring up the results of his arduous guidance as it was convenient.

Li Qingshan sighed inside. After three years of war, probably only the school of Novels had become even more prosperous than before.

The main reason was the school of Novels never had any decent disciples in the first place. New disciples like them were second or third layer Qi Practitioners at most. Even getting the school of Mohism to create a few random puppets was better than sending them to their deaths.

Some people were destroyed because they were too powerful, while some people managed to remain alive safely because they were too weak.

He sat down for a talk and before he knew it, a few hours had passed.

Li Qingshan stood up and bid farewell, wanting to return to the Chain mountains with Xiao An, only for Hua Chengzan to stop him. He had just finished his discussion with Liu Zhangqing and was right about to invite Li Qingshan back to the Hawkwolf Guard to preside over the situation.

Never had he heard of a Scarlet Hawk commander who stopped showing up after the day of his promotion. Now that the war had come to a conclusion, there were a thousand things waiting to be done for the Hawkwolf Guard. They needed him to watch over everything.

“Little Hua, I’ll leave everything up to you. I want to spend some time in secluded cultivation.”

Li Qingshan patted Hua Chengzan’s shoulder. However, before he was even done, Hua Chengzan said in surprise, “Seclusion again? Didn’t you just emerge from seclusion?”

Never had he heard of a cultivator who entered secluded cultivation so often either.

Secluded cultivation was not simply locking yourself up in your dwelling. Cultivators only chose secluded cultivation once their cultivation had reached a certain bottleneck, or they had reached a certain degree of accumulation.

“Heh, I comprehended some things recently.”

Li Qingshan was not lying. He had yet to carefully comprehend his experience and lessons from the battle with the Spider Queen. At the same time, he had not consolidated his comprehensions from refining Moon Court lake yet. Both of these took time.

“Alright then!” What else could Hua Chengzan say? The most important thing to cultivators was still cultivation. Everything else, such as the Hawkwolf Guard or the overall situation of the world, was of much lesser importance. “Though, the path of cultivation is about advancing step by step. If you’re far too eager for instant success, it’ll merely slow you down. It’ll be easy for you to suffer from qi deviation.”

“I know. You should be careful when you deal with the moon demon too. Hopefully you don’t go out to beat a tiger, only to get injured yourself.” Li Qingshan obviously understood the principle of taking one step at a time. He had not actually spent much time or energy on the Arts of the Boundless Ocean.

He also needed to practise the extremely profound ability, the Nine Transformations of the Demonic and Divine, at the same time, as well as maintain his status in the world of daemons. Time had never been enough for him. He had always wanted to learn artifact forging too, but he never had the leisure.

Hopefully the situation could mellow out for a period and give him some more time to cultivate once this war ended!

“The tiger is too vicious. It’s not something I can beat up. I just want to keep the tiger satisfied so that it hurts fewer people.”

Li Qingshan smiled. “That won’t be easy. We’ve gained an impressive rival in love after all.”

“A rival in love.”

Suddenly, Hua Chengzan discovered he had miscalculated one aspect. The moon demon had publicly professed his love from Gu Yanying, so how would the Marquis of Ruyi respond? The exchange this time would probably lead to unexpected problems.

However, the development of the situation seemed to confirm Hua Chengzan's thoughts. The Marquis of Ruyi had never turned down Liu Zhangqing's petition, but he would be reluctant to agree to it.

Liu Zhangqing refused to hand over the Watermirror disc so easily, and the matter had been shelved like that.

Li Qingshan obviously would not panic. The one panicking should be Zhou Tong. It had been a moment of inspiration for him in the first place. If this insignificant move of his succeeded, then that would be for the best, but if it failed, it was not a pity either.

Actually, he had already forgotten about this.

In Qing Xiao's Home, Li Qingshan shut his eyes as blue light ebbed like the tide from his body, producing the vague sound of waves.

He devoted all his focus to that apart from saving a part of it, so his clone could continue refining bodies of water and expanding the god seal.

His attention was completely submerged in his sea of consciousness. The boundless sea of consciousness was like a huge mirror, clearly reflecting two figures.

One was Li Qingshan. The other was Spider Queen Lolth.

From their first meeting to every single meeting afterwards, he did not omit a single conversation that they had. It then went to the intercourse in Cobweb city, the bitter battle under Cobweb city, and his indulgence and venting after victory. It covered everything.

Li Qingshan seemed like he was reminiscing a lover, recollecting every single expression and movement she had made.

From a certain perspective, enemies were indeed closer than lovers. Hating a person would lead to constant thought about them every single day, while it was very difficult to achieve this with only loving a person.

Of course, Li Qingshan did not hate Lolth. His memories mostly triggered excitement and fervour.

Her wounds, her daemon qi, should be completely recovered already! So why hasn't she come for revenge yet? Is she preparing some sort of secret weapon?

The tiger demon growled in his heart, desiring another battle with her! He could imagine the battle to be extremely difficult, but that was what made it interesting.

He was no longer the same Li Qingshan of the past either. Gaining control over Moon Court lake held extraordinary significance to him. Apart from the direct benefits, it also affected his mentality.

He submerged his mind in the illusionary figure of the spirit turtle that radiated with an extremely tranquil aura to comprehend and feel it.

To another side of the dwelling, Xiao An cupped her hands, holding the blood daemon core she had obtained from killing Bloodshadow in between them.

The blood daemon core changed its shape like water as it produced a strange hiss, like the wails of ghosts from hell.

Xiao An freed up her left hand and waved it upwards.

Twenty-one Skull Prayer Beads scattered, turning into skulls as they circled above her head.

She raised the blood daemon core in her right hand with some difficulty. Its shape had already changed completely, becoming a thin disc. It rippled like flowing water.

Suddenly, she pushed upwards, and the blood daemon core flew up. The skulls opened their mouths together, spraying Samādhi Flames of White Bone at the blood daemon core.

She had formally begun to refine the Blood Sea Banner.

At the same time, in Moon Court lake.

Li Qingshan refined the surrounding waters without even resting for a second. Under the control of the same will, his main body and his clone advanced at the same time to become stronger.

Before he knew it, four months had passed.

Li Qingshan used half a month to refine a great river that stretched over five hundred kilometers before coming to a temporary stop. He gazed at the Water God Seal in his hand. It was as translucent as before, glowing with blue light, except the patterns had become even clearer and more complicated. It was no longer completely flat. Instead, it became slightly three-dimensional.

And, he could clearly sense the waters radiate outward in all directions from Moon Court lake. Moon Court lake was like a beating heart, and the rivers were the vessels that delivered blood.

However, seeing how Spider Queen Lolth had not come to challenge him, he caught the scent of danger. Perhaps the concept of time to daemons was different from humans.

Li Qingshan dared not be careless, but he would not worry too much about it either. He believed he definitely became stronger faster than Lolth.

If she really were willing to drag it out, then that would work too. If she waited a few decades or a century, then it would no longer be a battle of life and death. She could simply bend over and wait for him to visit.

After resting for a moment, Li Qingshan continued to search for bodies of water connected to Moon Court lake that he had yet to refine. What he wanted to find the most was the water system connected to the underground river, but he never managed to find it.

He could not help it. There were far too many rivers connected to Moon Court lake, and every single one of them meandered about, making it very difficult to determine their direction from one end. Some seemed to lead underground, but after flowing underground for a while, they would surface again.

Some clearly flowed in the direction of the territory, but upon flowing into some mountains, they would take a few turns and veer off elsewhere.

“Just where is it?”

Li Qingsha muttered to himself in the Chain mountains. He opened his eyes and checked on Xiao An. She was still focused on refining the Blood Sea Banner.

Within the Samādhi Flames of White Bone that burned quietly, a long, blood-red banner had already taken form. Li Qingshan could already sense the great power it was hiding, surging boundlessly like the ocean.

I thought it would be very easy to find. If I had known earlier, I would have gotten her to divine for me. Oh right, why don't I try the spirit turtle's ability of divination?

Suddenly, Li Qingshan came up with an idea. Throughout the four months, he had gained an even deeper comprehension of the Spirit Turtle Transformation. The Spirit Turtle's Profound Shell and the Watermirror's Image were not the only aspects that had become more profound.

He had gained a deeper comprehension of the abilities that spirit turtles possessed in the first place too.

Li Qingshan closed his eyes again. The spirit turtle's daemon core in his body flickered with light. At the same time, his clone five hundred kilometers away held the Water God Seal and sensed the ripples in Moon Court lake.

Vaguely, he placed his mind in the centre of Moon Court lake. A towering, mountainous island stood there.

Suddenly, he saw it. There was a vortex beneath the island.

Beneath the island was a cavern, which swallowed the lakewater endlessly.

He had always been looking at the edge of the lake, but he had never paid particular attention to the scenery of the lake, as a vortex like that was far too common in Moon Court lake. It was not worth any special attention.

And, by looking at the size of the hole, it was impossible for it to create a river as grand as the one underground. In the past, even if Li Qingshan discovered the hole, he would not have taken note of it.

Li Qingshan believed the senses of the spirit turtle. He immediately arrived above the vortex and channeled his daemon qi into the hole. As the Water God Seal advanced, it rapidly extended underground.

Chapter 509 - In the Ruyi Commandery

As the lakewater poured into the hole, it formed an underground river that twisted and raged through the darkness.

In the beginning, the flow was very small, small enough to condense a single god seal.

However, as the river water surged, more and more rivers converged together and the flow became greater and greater, plunging into the depths underground like it was unstoppable.

After another series of twists and turns, the flow gradually established. It moved in the direction of the underground territory.

Li Qingshan was overjoyed as he poured all of his efforts into it without hesitation. The underground river was much larger than any rivers he had refined so far. He could probably only refine it after quite the effort.

However, once he refined it, he would establish a connection between the two territories, and his foundation in the Clear River prefecture would become even more consolidated.

In Qing Xiao's Home, Li Qingshan stood up and nodded towards Xiao An before leaving the dwelling.

It was time for his main body to take action.

At the end of the day, his clone only possessed a portion of his daemon qi, and it did not possess the divine powers of the spirit turtle. When he concentrated on cultivating, using his clone to save time was a good idea, but he still had to tend to real issues in person. It was more convenient that way.

And, it was time for him to return underground and check on the situation. He had to take a look at how Ye Liusu was going with her great cause of unification.

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The blackwater salamander remained in his deep, underground lake, swimming around freely. He cultivated slowly with the speed of a daemon. Perhaps in a decade or a century's time, he would also become a powerful Daemon General, but right now, he was only a weak daemon.

Among the many underground daemons, the daemons in Li Qingshan's territory were probably the most fortunate. They safely avoided the war that might have threatened their lives.

The blackwater salamander suddenly sensed an unstoppable powerful daemon qi merge with his region of water. The water it could freely control originally had frozen into a prison in that instant.

In the black water, two specks of azure light appeared. In a blur, a spirit turtle swam past. The specks of blue light were the spirit turtle's eyes. It was clearly burdened with a large shell on its back, but its movements were filled with elegant and agile beauty, like it was dancing through the sky.

Compared to the directly-observable, tremendous daemon qi, another indescribable aura appeared. That was an aura of divinity, like a king on tour through his territory, like a god drawing up a divine kingdom.

Wherever it went, no matter how violent the water flow was, it would all settle down like its gaze.

However, when it swam closer, the figure of the spirit turtle dispersed, revealing Li Qingshan.

Li Qingshan's main body arrived beneath Moon Court lake. When he first began refining the underground river, he found it to be surprisingly easy. The deeper the underground river went, the heavier the flow became, and the way he refined it was actively expanding the Water God Seal, yet it felt as easy as refining a small river with his clone.

The speed at which he refined waters with his clone was fast enough to leave everyone in the dust. If they could witness the efficiency of his original body, they would probably be left dumbfounded.

At this moment, in the commandery city of Ruyi, there was indeed a group of people who were left stunned.

A glowing map covered a large wall. There were no cities or settlements on there, only mountains, rivers, and other geographic features. The mountains that rose and fell and the rivers that twisted and turned seemed like a huge dragon squirming on the ground, with its head and tail touching. However, it did not seem messy at all. It possessed the beauty of nature.

The waters were blue, but a small region had been dyed a bright red. Looking at its shape, it matched Moon Court lake and the surrounding waters.

“My lord, this is the landscape from the Green Province cauldron. The speed at which the moon demon, no, Northmoon refines the landscape has suddenly increased,” an old man reported.

The Marquis of Ruyi wore the same fancy hat and was still dressed in violet, except his chilly expression as if he was forcing a smile had vanished. It had been replaced by caution or even vigilance.

The spread colour of red was like carbuncles on his body. That’s right, the Ruyi commandery was territory that had been passed down through his clan for thousands of years. It was like an extension of his body.

He did not mind if daemons ran amok. He did not care either no matter how many regular people and cultivators died. However, refining the landscape and claiming to be a god was directly provoking his authority.

The right hand hidden within the Marquis of Ruyi’s large sleeve clenched into a fist. He felt an urge to barge through the door right now, rush to the Clear River prefecture, and kill him.

Actually, he did not even have to do anything personally. With a single order, mobilising a handful of Golden Core cultivators would be nothing difficult at all. Just the Golden Core cultivators who served in his marquis’ estate amounted to three.

However, he could not do this. He was not a chess piece, but he only dared to remain as a spectator. Let alone tampering with the chess pieces in this game, even respecting the rule of remaining as a silent spectator was the basics of the basics.

“What do you think?” The Marquis of Ruyi looked around. To his side stood two people on equal footing.

One was a middle-aged man. He was dressed in military uniform as his face was as stiff as a block of metal, without the slightest expression. His hands remained by his side as he stood sternly, like a glacier that never melted.

If Li Qingshan were present, he would definitely find a great resemblance to Han Anjun. He was Han Qiongzhi’s uncle, the great general Han Anguo.

“If this daemon remains, he’ll definitely become a source of great trouble.”

The Marquis of Ruyi nodded slightly, agreeing to that. "To think that Liu Zhangqing has actually reported to me that he wants to give the Watermirror disc to him. What is he thinking?"

The other person was obviously Gu Yanying, still dressed in clothes whiter than snow as she stood with her arms behind her back. Her sleeves were rolled up, revealing her pale forearms that seemed clean and smooth. The graceful smile hung forever on her face, making it impossible to guess her thoughts. She was like the invisible yet ever-changing wind.

"Heh, now that's interesting."

"Yanying, aren't you a little too unfazed?"

When the Marquis of Ruyi looked at her, even his gaze softened slightly, without the bone-deep arrogance of a marquis.

Of course, this was not only because of his feelings for her. Gu Yanying's status was exactly the same as his. No one knew the exact depth of her cultivation, not to mention there was the shadow that enveloped the entire sky of the Great Xia empire behind her.

Compared to her, even the mighty Marquis of Ruyi was merely a measly, local noble.

"It's just a game of chess. Why must we be so serious?"

"This is the ancestral property of my clan." The Marquis of Ruyi smiled bitterly as he stared at her. The part about her that enchanted him the most was not her absolute beauty, her noble status, or even her bearing that was as ungraspable as the wind.

Instead, it was a boldness of vision. Wind might not move, but air was omnipresent, filling the nine provinces.

Everyone said the Clear River prefecture was a game of chess, but apart from the few at the very top, who could actually treat it as a game of chess?

"Why don't we just give him the Watermirror disc and see how big of a wave he can create?" Gu Yanying's behaviour truly matched a spectator's, watching on without any problems with it developing out of hand.

"This..."

"He is one of my admirers after all." Gu Yanying's lips curled. She made no mention about the overall situation, making no effort to hide likes and dislikes.

"Since you're saying to give it to him, then we'll give it to him! What can I do about how unfortunate I am to end up in such a predicament? I probably should sympathise with this Northmoon."

The Marquis of Ruyi sighed, tossing the warning of "If this daemon remains, he'll definitely become a source of great trouble." to the back of his mind in the blink of an eye.

He did not want to come off as overly unsophisticated in front of her. Of course, this was not the primary reason. Recently, he had been under quite a lot of pressure too. Zhou Tong had indeed become

very frantic to retrieve his Lightning Slaughter sword. He managed to find a figure that the Marquis of Ruyi could not turn down to speak for him.

Gu Yanying made no mention of the situation, but the Marquis of Ruyi had already analysed it countless times internally. He considered the benefits that came with Zhou Tong undergoing the heavenly tribulation. What Gu Yanying said was only a prelude to his decision at most. With how long he spent cultivating so far, how could he do something so stupid just for the sake of someone's feelings?

Of course, it was possible to say the prelude was very important too. The Marquis of Ruyi felt caution or even vigilance towards Northmoon instinctively. It was far too unnatural for a daemon's cultivation to climb so rapidly, so he should have done everything he could to either slow him down or stamp him out. If it were not for Gu Yanying's words, he might have followed through with this idea.

And in the future, he would absolutely regret his decision today, which also proved that something like a boldness of vision could not be feigned. Some people really did not care about that.

As they spoke, Han Anguo maintained the usual style of the Han family, standing by silently without objecting at all.

Only when he was about to leave did Gu Yanying suddenly ask, "Has your niece succeeded with Foundation Establishment?"

"She just went through the heavenly tribulation two days ago. She's currently recovering." Han Anguo cast a questioning gaze at her, wondering why she had suddenly mentioned Han Qiongzhi.

"Have her report to me tomorrow!" Gu Yanying said straightforwardly.

Han Anguo was rather confused. He had no idea why she was treating Han Qiongzhi with such kindness and generosity, but being promoted directly to the White Wolf guard could never be bad. He did not want Han Qiongzhi to return to the Clear River prefecture right now either, at least until the situation had completely stabilised there. As a result, he nodded. "Alright."

The Marquis of Ruyi smiled. "You're talking about esteemed niece Qiongzhi, right? You should try and put another word in with her as her uncle. Just what does she want in exchange for the Heavenly Maiden Scatters the Blossoms painting? Does she really think I'll rip her off?"

"That'll be up to her."

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The great general's estate.

"No, I have to return!" Han Qiongzhi said firmly.

"I've already agreed to it. The commands of your superiors are absolute. As a Hawkwolf Guard, Gu Yanying is your commanding officer. You should follow her orders. Alright, stop being so stubborn. You're not a child anymore."

For once, Han Anguo's expression was gentle, which filled the young men and women present with envy. Since when had their father been so amiable with them? Not to mention, ever since Han Qiongzhi had come, their lives had become much better, so they all put in a word with Han Qiongzhi too.

“Yeah, sister Qiongzhi, just stay here. He even told you to wait for him!”

“What’s so good about that Li Qingshan anyway? It’s been so long and you’ve heard nothing from him. He hasn’t even written you a letter.”

Han Anguo said coldly, “He personally slew four Daemon Generals, all while fighting alone. He has even been promoted to the Scarlet Hawk commander of the Clear River prefecture now. Before you complain about others, why don’t you check yourselves first?”

They were immediately silenced, but they were still extremely unconvinced. That’s just because we never had the opportunity. Once this Li Qingshan comes, we’ll definitely see who’s stronger.

Han Qiongzhi was slightly surprised. She had spent her entire time in secluded cultivation so that she could breakthrough to Foundation Establishment. She had only found out now that Li Qingshan had already become the Scarlet Hawk commander, but she was happy nonetheless considering her uncle was praising him.

“Qingshan, you better come soon!”

Chapter 510 - Gift and Choices

The endless underground river that Li Qingshan had discovered was not the only one—it was only one of them—and they criss-crossed with one another like a spider’s web.

After comprehending the wonders of the Spirit Turtle Suppresses the Seas, his ambition began to swell. He was no longer content with refining this underground river. The range would exceed his territory, but were there any Daemon Generals bold enough to stop him?

As a result, whenever he encountered a fork, he would split his daemon qi. Even with the divine powers of the spirit turtle, this process still became extremely slow.

However, he was in no hurry, pushing forwards slowly so that he could construct a huge, underground net of water for himself.

At the top of Cobweb city in the dark chambers, a snowy-white figure was vaguely visible through the layers of curtains.

Loth laid on her bed, completely unclothed. Her crimson lips parted slightly, spitting out a thread as her ten fingers flew about. Even her eight legs waved around in a dazzling array. The spider silk was constantly spun and twisted as if she was weaving something.

She was serious and focused. Although she was naked, there was nothing erotic about it at all. She seemed extremely natural.

At the same time, her cold, noble, and ruthless bearing had completely vanished.

Right now, she seemed more like a craftsman, an artisan, carefully tending to her creation, having forgotten about the world outside. There were no distractions from the outside world that could influence her.

However, Li Qingshan’s act of refining water systems en masse still ended up alarming her.

Lolth raised her head and clearly sensed Li Qingshan's daemon qi spread and permeate the surroundings. She bit her crimson lips gently. A spiteful light flashed through her eyes, but it vanished in an instant. She lowered her head again and continued focusing on the work at hand.

Actually, this was the way a spider killed—spending lengthy amounts of time on preparation for the moment of surprise when the prey stepped into the net.

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“Croak croak! Great king! Great king!”

The ice frog leapt around in Li Qingshan's hand. The ice spring it occupied was also a source of a water system that Li Qingshan wanted to refine.

Li Qingshan smiled. “Looks like you're almost up to that step, so let me lend you some assistance.”

The ice frog had always been one of the strongest daemon soldiers under Li Qingshan's command, and it seemed to possess a rather special bloodline, which was why it could use the power of ice.

Even a few years ago, it was already very close to the Daemon General realm. After a few years of arduous cultivation, it had basically arrived at the cusp. However, the time required for the actual breakthrough would still be calculated using years.

However, Li Qingshan took out the Water God Seal and pointed at it gently, drawing out a thread of blue light and pouring it into the ice frog's head.

Immediately, the ice frog radiated with resplendent, blue light. The extreme coldness from the daemon core within its body permeated the surroundings.

With a plonk, the ice frog turned around and leapt into the ice spring.

“You better turn into a beauty to pay me back!”

Li Qingshan sniggered. He felt the ground tremble slightly, and the spring suddenly lit up, shining with the glow of lightning. Afterwards, it flickered and grew brighter and brighter.

Quite a while later, the trembling gradually subsided, and the glow of lightning slowly dimmed.

A delicate young man with icy-blue hair crawled out from the spring. He said, “Croak croak! thanks, great king!”

After a careful inspection, Li Qingshan confirmed he was indeed a young man and not a young woman. He said in disappointment, “Fine then. Looks like I'm unlucky. I'll give you a name. You can be... Li'l Blue! Sigh, let's hope Li'l Red is female.”

Abiding to his absolutely tasteless naming style, Li Qingshan casually named the ice frog “Li'l Blue”. As for the “great name” of “Li'l Red”, he had also come up with it on the spot. He felt like it suited the huge red carp very well.

“Croak, croak! Alright!”

The ice frog of the past, or Li'l Blue right now, obviously had no objections. He still did not have an idea of which human names were good or bad. Only until many years later did he come to understand, but when he began to resent it, it was already too late.

Li Qingshan directed Li'l Blue to swim upstream and continue cultivating in Moon Court lake. Afterwards, he conveniently flooded the spring with daemon qi, completing the refinement of another water system.

Right when he wanted to continue with his journey, he felt a familiar aura rapidly grow closer. Li Qingshan smiled and withdrew all of his aura, taking a step back and merging with the rock wall.

A figure stepped out of the darkness. Ye Liusu arrived by the spring. She wore a luxurious, black cape as she wore a silver circlet. A silver, crescent moon hung on her forehead, which made her seem mysterious and noble.

She looked around, unable to hide her anticipation, but she failed to find Li Qingshan and became slightly disappointed.

“Are you looking for me?”

Suddenly, a hand hugged her from behind. Her body tensed up before relaxing again, leaning in his arms softly.

“Master, I- I sensed your daemon qi.”

Afterwards, I left behind the group of night roamers to directly come and see you. Her face heated up slightly as she felt something she had never felt before. She felt extremely peaceful in his arms. Her exhaustion from dealing with the schemes of all the night roamers faded away silently.

“How has your great cause of unification been going?”

“It’s been alright, because master...”

“You should change the way you refer to me! That doesn’t suit you.”

Li Qingshan smiled. Although making the proud, independent Ye Liusu call him master was something that made him very happy, it was exactly because of this that she could never be like Ye Liubo and call him that from the bottom of her heart, filled with true feelings.

“That’s... not really a good idea!” Ye Liusu hesitated and turned around, looking at Li Qingshan with twinkling eyes. “I just won’t call you master when no one’s around, alright?”

“Whatever you want.”

Ye Liusu smiled faintly, taking the initiative to wrap her arms around his neck and offering up a kiss in a rather bashful and inexperienced manner. She stopped very quickly as her eyes were filled with undisguisable affection.

She did not want to remain as only a servant to him. When she chose to abandon everything and wander the world with him, she understood what she wanted. This wish had only intensified, and he had heard her voice inside, feeling extremely happy.

“Do you want your gift?” Li Qingshan smiled.

“Yep.”

Ye Liusu possessed none of the power and prestige of the past great king Ye Liusu right now. The coldness and resolve she showed in front of the night roamers had completely vanished. She was as docile as a teenage girl in love.

“Then close your eyes.”

Li Qingshan traveled upstream with Ye Liusu, passing through the current and finally arriving in Moon Court lake. He passed through the many formations and arrived in the Clear Court sect of the past, the Moon Court dwelling of the present.

“Alright. Open your eyes!”

“What’s this?” Ye Liusu opened her eyes and saw the rising and falling halls and pavilions under the moonlight.

“We’re in Moon Court lake. I’ve already refined it. This island originally belonged to a sect called the Clear Court sect, but I’ve chased them away. From now onwards, it is the Moon Court dwelling, as well as the territory you wanted under the stars!”

Li Qingshan pointed at the sky. It just happened to be late at night, so the brilliant moon hung in the sky, surrounded by stars.

“This is... my...”

Ye Liusu’s heart seemed to drift towards the stars with Li Qingshan’s hand.

She had intended to establish a territory above ground since a long time ago, but she understood human cultivators were not amicable with otherfolk. Acting rashly would only turn the night roamers into targets.

She had this ideal, but she still had to listen to her rational side. Not to mention it all meant nothing if she did not possess a territory she could fall back onto.

Now, Li Qingshan had personally delivered the territory she could only dream of to her, completing her long-cherished wish. The surprise and joy she felt went without saying.

Ye Liusu returned to her senses and pushed Li Qingshan onto the ground. She was unable to express her feelings with words anymore. All she could do was embrace him with all the strength she had in her.

Li Qingshan laid on the soft grass and saw the corner of Ye Liusu’s eyes moisten. They glimmered like stars, turning into tears very quickly. She became a weeping beauty, becoming even more beautiful and enchanting.

He also became filled with a faint feeling of joy, wiping away the tears for Ye Liusu. He held her delicate face and gently kissed her lips.

Ye Liusu made a clumsy response, extending the tip of her tongue into his mouth. He immediately sucked it and began tasting it.

Li Qingshan pulled off the black cloak on Ye Liusu. She was dressed just like when they had first met. The simple, black armour only covered her most important parts such that both her thin waist and slender legs were exposed. A flowery pattern extended across her skin, making her mysterious and alluring.

Li Qingshan rolled over on top and smiled. "When we first met, I think we were like this."

Ye Liusu turned crimson from embarrassment. Back then, never did she think there would be a day when she would lie beneath him willingly. Her eyes suddenly began to flicker. "Actually, I have another wish."

"What?"

"I read a book by humans about the matters between a man and woman. They were the only ones for each other. If one of them died, the other would not be able to live any longer either. It made me very envious. It made me wish I also had someone like that. However, this kind of feeling will never appear among night roamers, and I never dared to wish for it either until I met you."

Ye Liusu was rather embarrassed, but she was very calm, as if she was waiting for him to do anything he wanted to her.

Li Qingshan shuddered inside. Listening to her sincere words, he was very touched, but from Ye Liusu's expression, he could not help but think of Han Qiongzhi.

Had she emerged from seclusion yet? Had she succeeded with Foundation Establishment? When would she return?

Li Qingshan rolled onto the grass and gazed at the sky full of stars. He murmured, "The only one." The stars turned into Han Qiongzhi's longing face as he felt a tinge of guilt inside.

The tender love he usually showed to Ye Liubo was merely a master's affection to a pet, not to mention nothing had actually occurred yet, so he felt no guilt. As for what he went through with Lolth, it was more like a great adventure filled with danger and excitement. Even his fate had been unpredictable, so he had no time to feel guilt even if he wanted to.

However, with Ye Liusu, he had truly been captivated. He was unable to avoid it.

"What's wrong?" Ye Liusu propped herself up and asked in confusion.

Li Qingshan pulled her into his arms and shook his head with a smile. "Nothing. I just thought of something I had promised, but I failed to uphold it."

Fortunately, this was not his former life, or he really would have committed the most heinous of crimes. In this day and age, even the icy-cold Han Anjun had a great group of concubines. This was why despite the constant rumors between Ru Xin and him, Han Anjun had never killed his way over and ordered him to move out of the Chain mountains.

Compared to this, what Li Qingshan had even less of a choice over was his identity as a daemon. Now this was something that truly touched on his life and survival. If he handled it badly, he would definitely harm himself and others.